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Oral Narrative Mnemonic Devices and the Framing of the Zambian Novel in English: A Study of Selected Zambian Novels

by

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Declaration

I, Mwaka Siluonde, declare that the thesis hereby submitted by me for the Doctor of Philosophy (English) degree at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at any other university/faculty. Furthermore, I cede copyright of the thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.

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Acknowledgements

Dedication

To my husband, children and two families.

Abstract

This study, which focuses on the role that oral narrative mnemonic devices play in framing the Zambian novel in English, argues that images in the novel do not form an unbroken continuum from oral narratives. This argument is based on the assumption in both African and Zambian literary theory and practice that the presence of oral narrative images in the novel creates collective cultural identity by evoking an indigenous precolonial culture lost during colonialism. A number of studies on Zambian novels in English point to the relationship between oral narrative mnemonics and the novel by identifying the link between oral narrative images, languages and cultural identity. My study departs from these studies, observing that while oral narrative devices play a role in framing the novel in English, the images themselves are subject to a multicultural, dynamic, temporal and fluid context of the novel. I mainly draw on Derrida's deconstruction of logocentric and binary thought to argue that images in the novel cannot be a linear continuation from oral narratives. The idea of oral narrative linearity creates the notion that oral narratives are a natural logocentre of meaning because orality is prior to writing (and images in the novel) and therefore closer to logocentric natural language than writing. Furthermore, this creates binary thought where oral narratives and images in the novel are considered as a binary pair and writing is viewed as the signified to which images in the novel absolutely refer and come from. The study modifies Derridian deconstruction with theoretical concepts such as Bakhtin's heteroglossia, carnivalesque, chronotope; Bhabha's 'third space' and Said's idea on 'othering'. I apply a critical textual approach on selected Zambian novels in English to deconstruct both logocentric thinking and binary pairs in which oral narratives are considered the logocentric signfied of images in the novel. Furthermore, I deconstruct the idea of a hierarchised binary pair in which oral narratives are preferred as more representational of images in the novel than any other aspect. I argue that images in the novel cannot be a linear continuation from oral narratives because firstly, images in novels such as *Day of the Baboons* (Saidi, 1991) and *Patchwork (2011)* are characterised by multi-cultural, heteroglossic and carnivalesque images. Secondly, I challenge the idea that images in the novel represent a logocentre such as oral narratives which is always located outside the sign. This is observed in how images in *Changing Shadows* (Musenge, 2014) and *The Chosen Bud* (Luangala, 1991) compensate for the inherent absence of the signified within the sign by instituting differànce. Thirdly, I argue that images in the novel cannot be mere replications of oral narratives because of inherent unstable time and space (chronotopic) related to the internal structure of artistic signs. This results in flexible and changeable images in novels such as *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) and *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) that affect frozen transmission of images from oral narratives to the novel and from one epoch to another. Fourthly, I argue that the absolute articulation of an absolute signified, such as oral narratives, is prevented by the fact that images in novels such as *Echoes of Betrayal (Namutowe,2019)* are

articulated in an unstable in-between space, which is perpetually haunted by the return of the uncanny and traces of the past and an anticipated future which always arrives too late to be grounded. Furthermore, my study of *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) demonstrates that the unstable in-between space is also a space that differentiates theory such as the discourse on linearity from reality because reality often articulates something different from the desired theoretical signification. What is produced is a sign that diverges from the theoretical signified and its attempt to be articulated as such produces something that can only be located in-between but beyond desired signification. Lastly, I argue that images in the novel cannot be linear descendents of oral narrative because subscription to such a pre-inscribed entity is similar to subscription to a term such as identity. Thus, fixed terms and discourses, such as oral narrative linearity, fail when they cannot account for all the images they purport to identify or represent as demonstrated in the *Mourning Bird* (2019) where pre-incscriptions of identity by the centre create margins when those that do not fit into authoriesd categories are othered and silenced. Hence, I adopt Brubaker and Cooper's idea to drop such fixed categories of analysis such as identity. In additon, I engage in a discussion on other 'others' or idioms (other than the dominat discourse) that emerge in *The Old Drift* (2019) (and the silences and gaps in literary analysis) while our focus is on the dominant discourse such as oral narrative linearity. This is in order to suggest that there is no fixed parentage relationship between oral narrative images and the novel because images in the novel are dynamic and everchanging.

Key Words

Oral Narrative Mnemonic Devices, Zambian novel, Deconstruction, Heteroglossia, chronotopes, third space, identity.

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Chapter One: General Introduction

1.1 Mapping the Field

"We lived at the crossroads of cultures. We still do today" (Achebe, 2003, p. 190).

The influence from indigenous oral narrative tradition on Zambian post-colonial novels in English remains contested in both literary theory and practice today. This may be attributed to the supposition that oral narrative mnemonic devices and images in the novel form an unbroken linear continuum from oral narratives to the novel at the expense of anything else that does not fit into such a category. Works by scholars such as Senghor (1977), Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa, Ihechukwu and Madubuike (1985), Ashcroft (2004) and Onwumere and Egblonu (2014) have influenced this standpoint with their insistence that there is something uniquely African about African literature and that this uniquness is reflected in the unbroken linear transmission of images from oral narratives to the novel. The views are accentuated by the decolonial and nationalist cultural affirmists' claim that the presence of oral narrative mnemonic devices and images in the novel in English is for the purpose of creating and evoking collective cultural memories. The perception here is that cultural defining values are embodied in indigenous oral narrative images and passed on from one generation to another in the novel, which becomes a medium of cultural transmission in the contemporary literate society. In many parts of Africa, including Zambia, the above ideas were especially shaped during the independence years by anthropological and sociological perspectives on oral literature (Dathorne, 1974; Ng'andu, 2009; Cancel, 2013), which emphasised the role of literature in society. Further to this are social functionist theories propagated by scholars such as Achebe (1975) and his views that the writer has a role to re-educate and regenerate images of pre-colonial society. I suggest that the idea of society can in fact only be based on collective memories which reflect an imagined homogenous cultural identity that does not exist in reality. It is therfore worth noting from the preceding discussion that images from oral literature and tradition have been viewed as important in defining individual cultures of African societies. It comes as no surprise that, in the same way that oral narrative images defined pre-colonial societies and created imagined collective memories and boundaries, contemporary (oral narrative) images in the novel are looked to for similar national cultural evocation and formation.

Yet, the dilemma characterising the study of African and specifically Zambian literature is laid bare in the way it is caught at the crossroads of culture in the aftermath of colonialism (Achebe, 2003, p. 190), as highlighted in the above epigraph to the chapter, or in the labyrinth of the interpreter who fails to find a home in either the imported language or his native language (Ashcroft, et al., 2004). Literary analysis is faced with the challenge of whether to return to the past, to embrace the new or to adapt the old to the new. As such, what to write about, how to write, who to write for, and how to read the written texts have been common subjects for discussions concerning the literature of most postcolonial countries including Zambia. In the midst of this ambivalence, I deconstruct the hierarchised and polarised idea that views oral narratives (orality) and images in the novel (writing) as binaries in which oral narratives are privileged as the absolute logocentric centre of meaning from which images in the novel originate. My study of selected Zambian novels in English aims at deconstructing the view that the presence of oral narrative mnemonic devices and images is evidence of a linear progression from Zambian oral narrative tradition to the novel. I argue that this promotes binary thinking where one pair (oral narrative signified) is considered more representative and logocentric than the other (images in the novel as signifier). In addition, while in some cases oral narrative mnemonic devices play a role in framing the novel in English, the images themselves are drawn from a more cosmopolitan[1] and dynamic society. This means the images are characteristically, dynamic, flexible, everchanging and non-static entities that cannot be passed on as frozen images from oral narratives or signify a linear progression from oral narratives to the novel. I develop this argument in my analsysis of images depicted in William Saidi's (1991) *Day of the Baboons*, Ellen Banda-Aako's (2011) *Patchwork*, Henry Musenge's (2014) *Changing Shadows*, John Luangala's (1991) *The Chosen Bud*, Dominic Mulaisho's (2007) *Tongue of The Dumb*, Binwell Sinyangwe's (2010) *Quills of Desire*, Anisha Namutowe's *Echoes of Betrayal* (2019), Gideon Phiri's (1994) *Ticklish Sensation*, Mubanga Kalimamukwento's (2019) *The Mourning Bird* and Namwali Serpel's (2019) *The Old Drift*. My analysis in this study is based on the view that there is need for a more eclectic approach to the Zambian novel in English that considers the many possible interactions taking place in the novel besides oral narrative and indigenous cultural influence.

It is pertinent to provide a working definition of 'oral mnemonic devices' at this point, since they constitute the centre of the problem being investigated by this study. Oral mnemonic devices refer

to familiar images and techniques that are used as memory aids in predominantly oral societies (including pre-colonial African and Zambian societies) because of their ability to evoke and retrieve desired material from memory. These images may include landscapes, linguistic items, metaphors and proverbs. Ong (2004) observes that it was normal to find such images being used in primary oral societies to pass traditional values and beliefs from one generation to another. Of particular note and of direct relevance to this study is Okpewho's (1992; 2004), observation on how the use of mnemonic devices in literature forms a corpus of what is termed as oral narrative mnemonic devices. This is because many of the devices, such as vivid characterisation, episodes and repeatitions, are used specifically to aid the storage and perormance of lenghy oral narratives in the absence of writing. That is why, although Finnegan (2012) does not specifically refer to them as oral narrative mnemonic devices, Finnegan (2012) recognises the prevalence of certain conventions related to storytelling in many African societies. It follows that many of these devices are culturally specific because memorability of material and efficacy of mnemonic devices depends on how familiar the mnemonic devices are to a particular society. The resultant cultural specifity and tendency to use cultural material as oral mnemonic devices presents such images as custodians of culture even when they are used in novel. Therefore, this view forms the basis of the argument in both African literary theory and practice that the presence of oral narrative images in the novel in English is evidence of the cultural specificity of the African and Zambian novel.

The study is generally guided by the Derridan deconstructionist agenda that rejects logocentric thought and related binary oppositions that inspire dichotomies in which one member is privileged as more representational than the other (Derrida, 1974). Specifically, I deconstruct the premise that images in the novel originate from oral narratives and move linearly as frozen images to the novel. Furthermore, Derrida's (1974) rejection of Saussurian signifier/signified binaries is applicable to my disavowal of the view that images in the novel are involved in a fixed signifier/signified relationship in which images in the novel absolutely refer to oral narratives. Following from this I firstly examine how the idea of binary opposition, which is related to the dichotomisation of oral narratives (signified) and novels images (as signifier), is broken down by the novel as a site of mutual inclusiveness or a bricolage of different cultures, religions, social groups and so on in *Day of the Baboons* (Saidi, 1991) and *Patchwork* (Banda-Aako, 2011). Furthermore, I utilise Bhabha's (1994; 2004) 'third space' theory on the location of culture to determine whether images born from

an unstable in-between space but lying beyond the confines of fixed signifier/signified relations can refer to anything concrete such as a fixed signifier or signified (and oral narrative image). This is because in the study's selected texts, such as *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) and *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994), the theoretical signifier and signified is different from the actual articulation of the sign or image.

Furthermore, Bakhtin's (1981) theory on heteroglossia, together with what he terms dialogics and the carnivalesque are pertinent to my interpretation of Derrida's (1974) rejection of the hierarchisation of binary opposites. This applies to the idea where oral narratives are considered more representational of images in the novel than any other aspects that may influence the images. I consider images in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) and *Patchwork* (2011) as the multi-voiced or heteroglossic images in the novel that interact in a way similar to a literal carnival where all authority and superiority of one culture/class or social group is suspended. In this way, I evaluate the implication of the challenge posed by novelistic images on the signifier/signified dichotomy and the authority of oral narratives or any other absolute signified of the sign. Specifically, the role of multicultural, heteroglossic and carnivalistic images in destablising the traditional view on the relationship between oral mnemonics and the written novel. This is complicated further by considering the idea of the chronotope (Bahktin, 1981), which encapsulates the idea that artistic constructions and by extension images in the novel are inherently characterised by varying time and space relations. Therefore, I explore the relationship between chronotopic structure and variability of images in the novel with the idea of changeable inter- and intra- chronotopic level relations in the images of the novels and in particular in my analysis of *Quills of Desir*e (2010). In addition, whether unpredictable and variable images born from chronotopic polysystems and pure duration, as depicted in a text such as *Tongue of the Dumb* (2007), can reflect a sign in which signifier/ signified interact with one term privileged over the other.

The study is further anchored on the Derridan (Derrida, 1974) deconstruction of the logocentric idea that everything relates to a logocentric centre or origin to which they originate from. In like manner, orality (oral literature and narratives) is viewed as a linear origin and centre of meaning for images in the novel (writing) because of its closer proximity to natural language as a logocentre (Derrida, 1974). Both from this and decolonial perspectives, the novel (and writing) is viewed as an intrusion on oral art and it only seems natural to suggest that novels and their images

nevertheless form a linear transition from oral narratives as a point of origin (Ong, 2002). I presently reject such a logocentric assumption using Derrida's (1974) observation that a signified located outside the sign, as is the case where the idea of oral narratives or any other entity as an absolute logocentre or absolute signified of meaning, is flawed. This is because such a centre of meaning always lies outside the sign (in the novel) making it empty of meaning except if viewed according to Derrida's (1978; 2004) idea of *différance*. Thus, I explore how images in *Changing Shadows* (2014) and *The Chosen Bud* (1991) institute differànce and cancel the idea of stable images in the novel that can refer to any stable signified outside the novel.

Lastly, I dismantle the idea of a logocentre located outside of the sign (novel and its images) based on my view that fixation on a pre-inscribed absolute signified, such as oral narratives, is tantamount to fixation on the term 'identity'. The term identity or any fixed category such as oral narratives falls short as a tool for analysis when, according to Brubaker and Cooper (2000), it fails to account for everything it purports to identify in the novel. I argue that fixation on 'identity' or oral narrative logocentre promotes 'othering' because the search for identity is synonymous with an ungraspable logocentre located outside the sign. This is because the search for identity and oral narrative influence is motivated by inherent helplessness or absence of internal identity that makes one project their identity on a desired object. This makes proponents of the discourse on orality and identity to fix their eyes on a privileged signified, in this case oral narratives, as absolute identity for images in the novel. Consequently, I analyse images in *The Mourning Bird* (2019) to detrmine the 'othering' and creation of centre/ margin binaries when images that qualify for membership in authorised categories are included and those that do not are excluded or marginalised. As such, I adopt Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) idea to drop the term identity as a mode of analysis and adopt other idioms that encompass infinite possible images. To this end, I explore the working of other 'others' (other than the absolute signified) that are articulated in *The Old Drift* (2019) to examine whether images can be tied to any fixed and pre-inscribed logocentre such as oral narratives located outside the image and the novel.

1.2 Contextualising the Zambian Novel in English
The premise that the Zambian novel in English is a continuation from indigenous oral narrative tradition is misleading because the concept of the 'novel' itself only became familiar to Zambia during colonialism. This premise has been motivated in Zambia, as is the case in many countries

where emphasis has been placed on the social-functionist role of literature (Ashcroft, 2004; Finnegan, 2012), by the social-political relationship between literature and the embodiment of culture and identity (Chinweizu, et al., 1985; Senghor, 1977). For this reason, one witnesses an emphasis on novels that included images from oral narratives and indigenous tradition immediately after Zambia's independence (Primorac, 2014). This is part of national and decolonialist ambitions to recapture a precolonial indigenous cultural identity lost during colonialism that one witnesses as part of the reforms aimed at economic and social decolonisation. Such a claim inadvertently suggests that colonial literature and specifically the introduction of literacy brought changes to indigenous art and prevented the art and its images from being frozen replications of their oral counterparts. Research on the imposition of foreign culture reveals that colonisers did not come to Africa and other colonies only to rule but brought with them 'culture carrying language[s]' to seal their dominion (wa Thiongo, 1986, p. 5). Viswanathan (2003, p. 434) outlines that in British India, English literary studies were introduced because British colonial administrators "provoked by… fears of native insubordination…discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education." As a result, the literary texts that were taught had a high English historical content and more likely to indoctrinate a history of the coloniser in the colonised students (Ashcroft, et al., 2004, p. 5). This is definitely the reality with many African countries, including Zambia, which followed the Cambridge School Syllabus during colonialism and immediately after independence and prescribed English texts on the curriculum. This is also the first time we witness literature influenced by missionary and colonial literacy in Zambia (Dathorne, 1974).

The adoption of new modes of writing and reading based on literacy had a huge impact on societies, such as the African ones, which previously relied on oral literature and its emphasis on performance and memory. The introduction of literacy fostered foreign literary concepts and approaches, such as the novel, into the body of African literature. Thus, it is not surprising that elements of the western novel such as the use of the "conventional novelistic element of the anonymous third person narrator" (Kondala, 2013, p. 43) are evident in the work of early Zambian novelists such as Stephen Mpashi. The use of this kind of narrator over the interactive oral narrative communal narrator indicates the way in which the western novel took root and broke the linear progression from the oral narrative during colonialism. Some of the consequences of writing on

oral literature and Zambian literature are evident in characterisation. As is the case with oral literature, most of the characterisation takes place during the performance itself where the performer uses paralinguistic tools to develop characters. However, some studies on oral performances have overlooked the paralinguistic tools and note that the characters are too flat and simple (Okpewho, 1992). As such, the round character one observes in many novels is assumed to be born out of the ability to "represent present-day consciousness" (Ong, 1982, p. 135) by probing thought processes, which is possible for someone writing because they have time and space to do so. By contrast, characterisation in oral and written productions cannot be viewed in the same light.

This does not suggest that the western world always relied on literacy and that the dialectics between orality and literacy are purely an African phenomenon. Our understanding of the foreign concepts introduced onto the African scene and other colonised worlds can be enhanced from the observation that by the time the two cultures clashed, literacy in Europe had been dominant over orality for a longer period and that orality had lost its significance in society. Ong (1982, p. 10) substantiates that what started as a move to embracing writing in the western world by "transcription of oral performances such as orations…eventually produced strictly written compositions for assimilation directly from the written surfaces." This is because writing could now do things that orality could never do or could only do differently. Many aspects in the novel are different from oral narratives/literature because of the former being written down. It also meant that writers and other cultural producers had to follow the value distinctions of literature which valorised the written and excluded the oral (Ong, 1982). This argument can be stretched further by examining the nature of the earliest theoretical considerations on poetics and characterisation which coincidentally come from the earlier literate Greek and Roman societies. Aristotle and Horace's *Poetics* and works on characterisation are clearly prescriptive and not descriptive. Aristotle's definition of tragedy can at this point be noted as:

> An imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions. (Habib, 2005, p. 54)

Aristotle's definition of tragedy, drawn from the written form, results in a closed definition of tragedy and excludes any other text which does not conform to it. Later theories of the 20th century, such as formalism and structuralism, are divorced from orality. According to Russian formalists such as Roman Jacobson, "literature would be considered…as something with specifically literary characteristics that make it literature" (Rivkin & Ryan, 2004, p. 3). What is significant is that the transition from orality to literacy witnessed writing transitioning into creating its own correct scripting practices, form and plot for the novel and short story.

It is pertinent to note that the movement from orality to literacy, in particular the manner in which literacy, literature and the novel were introduced in the Zambian and African societies, symbolised western cultural intrusion and defilement. The colonial period witnessed both the development of education and adoption of the novel, and an orientation towards a text based approach to writing. Yet one observes conscious and unconscious reservations from many African authors and literary analysists (Ashcroft, 2004) to completely abandon indigenous oral narrative images. As a result, some oral characteristics and images were adapted, translated and made to function and fit into the foreign concept of the novel. It must also be noted that when the primary goal was to model the foreign 'novel', writers still found themselves influenced by oral tradition. In fact, proponents of the discourse on orality (Chinweizu, et al., 1985) would later influence the arguement that the Zambian novel and its images are a linear continuation from oral narratives, when it became paramount to defend the African and Zambian novel as authentically African (Mbwayu, 1987; Primorac, 2014; Chilala, 2016).

1.3 Decolonising the Novel: In Search of Cultural Identity

It is against this backdrop of cultural imposition that the literary theory and practice of Zambia and other former colonies turned to qualifying their novels as containing images drawn from individual traditional repertoire and oral narratives (Dathorne, 1974; Ashcroft, 2004; Primorac, 2014). More especially, the use of oral narrative mnemonic devices was encouraged as an attempt at using literature to mediate a collective and national memory (Ashcroft, 2004). As such, there is a continued use of images, allusions, characters, and other stylistic devices from oral tradition in novels. Most of the studies on post-colonies are influenced by the mandate of post-colonial communities to decolonise and hence restore their indigenous literatures. Ashcroft et al, (2004, p. 115) note that, "The creative development of post-colonial societies is often determined by the

influence of this pre-colonial, indigenous culture and the degree to which it is still active." This means that novels are analysed based on the extent to which they draw from indigenous oral narrative traditions and how much they contribute to the formation of cultural memories.

Such a decolonial move is especially complicated for settler countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and North America where collective memory lies in the traces of the gradual interaction between both indigenous and other cultures. This is due to the observation that it is difficult to separate settler culture from indigenous culture because of the interaction between the two cultures over time. Yet, efforts have wrongfully been directed to finding a purely indigenous voice in a country where most people may have adopted the culture of the colonial mother country (Ashcroft, et al., 2004). This challenge of finding a discoverable past has motivated minority cultures in settler countries to write more about their indigenous literature and include oral culture in their novels. A post-colonial search for an indigenous cultural identity for Australia and New Zealand has witnessed such societies looking into Aborigine and Maori culture that existed before the arrival of Europeans. Mudororoo (2003) argues that attention be given in Australian literature to the presence of aboriginal content, which links it closer to indigenous Australia despite its European form. A comparison between white Australian literature and Aboriginal oral literature shows that the Aborigine oral literature is and can be more vital in that it is seeking to come to grips with and define a people, the roots of whose culture extends in an unbroken line far back into a past in which English is a recent intrusion (Mudororoo, 2003, p. 231). On the contrary, it must be realised that when cultures clash, there is no such thing as returning to an original and one cannot claim that there is an unbroken line from indigenous orality to the present. Every temporal point witnessed culture and also "the novel com[ing] into contact with the spontaneity of the inclusive present, this is what keeps the genre from congealing" (Bahktin, 1981, p. 8). It is thought provoking to imagine Aborigine oral literary culture as culturally defining to Australia as a whole when there are five hundred different aboriginal groups[2] and cultures in Australia. One is especially interested in how these different Aborigine groups reconcile their differences to form one Aborigine culture. Zambia similarly has many different ethnic groups[3] which makes the discussion on indigenous oral narrative mnemonic devices and evocation of cultural identity in the Zambian novel worth discussing. Hence, it is wrong to imagine a homogenous untainted original

cultural voice to which colonies can return after so much contact with other cultures, while there is need to discuss pre-colonial indigenous literature.

The interaction between oral literary devices and the novel in studies on Caribbean literature further establishes the complexity related to decolonising literature. The result of the interaction among cultures in the Caribbean resulted in a creolised or culturally mixed literature. For instance, traces of West African oral literature such as the "call and response patterns of songs…became conspicuously an important feature of Caribbean work-songs or folk-songs" (Isha, 2012, p. 216) in resemblance to the experience of American slaves. Consequently, the nature of oral literature of the creolised Caribbean is African but with plantation content. The presence of West African oral literary devices in Caribbean creole literature confirms that the African literary tradition lives in the peoples' consciousness and the infusion of the tradition in Caribbean literature evokes memories of African roots. Notwithstanding this, the plantation songs are evidence of cultural assimilation and cannot be classified as a distinct in-between space bridging West African art and any other culture. Instead, akin to Bhabha's (2004) 'third space' and Barthes' (2001) sign which exist only at signifier level, images are freed from the confines of fixation on a preferred signified. They are located in an unstable in-between space but beyond the confines of absolute signification that I discuss in Chapter Five. Hence, terms such as 'creolisation' or hybridisation (both perpetual processes) may be an appropriate description for the presence of oral narrative mnemonic devices in the Zambian novel in English.

The reality is that oral narrative influence in the novel can only be but one amongst other influences. It is ambitious to suggest, for instance, that the infusion of oral narrative characteristics "enables the Caribbean writer to move away from the constraints of Western Historiography" (Edwin & Bonnelame, 2012, p. 198). Edwin and Bonnelame (2012) argue that Caribbean novelists such as Olive Senior (1986; 2011)[4] use the storyteller position in much the same way as it would be used in oral narratives. If the intention is to consciously evoke cultural roots fixed in time, the move is insufficient. Cultural images, including the storyteller, undergo transformation and reshaping because of interaction in different contexts over time. This is evident in the criteria related to classification of images that make up the Belgian historical novel, which destabilises the idea of frozen mnemonic images such as the oral narrative communal storyteller. Bemong (2010) observes how the categories of images (glorification of the past, dissemination of

information about national past and stress on past and present genealogical link) reveal a combination of chronotopes from different epochs and genres. The combination of such a varied category of images is similar to Evan-Zohar's (2005) idea of polysystems that are defined as the diverse interaction of different systems of artistic creations leading to the creation of new images as others are shed off. Furthermore, the idea that oral narrative mnemonic images such as the storyteller are passed on untainted from oral narratives to the novel is challenged by the idea of 'pure duration'. Bergson (2009) suggests that past experience always affect our perception of the world leading to reshaping or new perspectives that are mirrored in artistic creations such as images in the novel. This means that culture is neither something static nor does it respond to fixed images but is continuously changing, hence my suggestion that Zambian novelists include oral narrative mnemonic devices among other images and sometimes as remodelled images in the novel.

The Haitian written literary body canon is yet another case of conscious inclusion of familiar indigenous oral material while being cognisant of other cultural forces in the novel. Aléxis (2003) accentuates a type of realism for Haitian novelists that he calls Marvellous Realism. This is a combination of realism and aspects of oral literature. His view is that western realism alone is not enough for the Caribbean novelist who requires aspects of the marvellous which can only be realised from oral literature. The suggestion of Marvellous Realism in the production of novels challenges one sided writing and literary criticism. A writer must not be restricted to using material from one culture. In the same way, a literary critic must not analyse a novel based on one cultural approach over another. Instead, an open mind which is not prejudicial is appropriate for analysis of the post-colonial novel. This is reminiscent of Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) advise to drop the term 'identity' (and any other fixed categories such as oral narrative influence) because of its failure to account for all the things it purports to identify. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) suggest the adoption of alternative idioms such as 'identification and categorisation'; 'self-understanding and social position'; 'commonality, connectedness and groupness' which can free objects from the confinement to 'identity'. This means, in the case of the contemporary Zambian novel in English, approaching the selected novels with full awareness of the possibility of culturally diverse mnemonic images in the texts. Furthermore, the discussion fosters a realisation that an approach

which favours one culture over another is not eclectic and therefore not a true representative of the Zambian novel in English.

Native American and African American minority cultures recognise the role that indigenous oral traditions play in their literature but the actual identity of their novels as double voiced is brought to bear by their dual history. Bryd (2014, p. 2) notes that the presence and use of the Native American and African American trickster tradition in Zitkala-Sa and Chestnut's work seeks "to bring light to bear in their people's struggle to be autonomous and free" respectively. Yet it must be realised that the influence from oral narrative tradition is only one side of the identity coin. This is made much clearer by considering the case of slaves who were forced to abandon their African land and language in the middle passage and resorted to a double voiced communication which only they and not their slave masters would understand. Similar to the language of the African trickster oral narrative, "African American tricksters literature is purposefully couched in complex figures of speech…as rhetorical strategies to meet new world goals" (Bryd, 2014, pp. 36-37). Bakhtin (1981) explains how present day societies and novels are made up of different voices and multi-layered communication, a notion which we will discuss in detail later in Chapter Two with the trickster image in *Day of the Baboons* (Saidi, 1991). Thus, oral narrative mnemonic techniques may be used in a different context within the Zambian novels and create mnemonic images in a different way from those created by oral literary methods.

Evidence of the contemporary relationship between orality and literacy is inherent in the way oral literary devices are inconspicuously "…woven into the written texts of most African American authors" (Bryd, 2014, p. 15). Accordingly, scholars, such as Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1988) in his canonical work *The Signifying Monkey*, suggests that African American literature should not be read from a one sided approach. He uses the African myth of the Igbo deity Esu to suggest that the double voiced characteristic of the literature is influenced by the master of trickery—the god Esu. According to the myth, Esu is known as 'the confuser of men', he could wear a shirt with different colours on the back and front such that a person who sees his back side would say he was wearing black and another who sees his front would say he was wearing red. One would probably have to see both sides to know what Esu was wearing or what he looks like and that is the point Gates Jr. wished to make about the overshadowed presence of oral literary aspects in African American Literature. Yet, the emphasis on the overshadowed presence of oral literary aspects in

the novel must not be done at the expense of other cultures present in the novel. In Chapter Six I suggest that such a move would just be as confining as the fixation on one pair of polar opposites such as oral narratives at the expense of other influences on images in the novel. African Americans are inclined to write in figurative language similar to the signifying monkey's language (Gates, 1988) because of the long history and impact of racism and slavery. For instance, Gates (1988) identifies a double voiced narration in Alice Walker's (1982) *The Color Purple,* which is characteristic of African oral tradition. In *The Color Purple* (1982), Celie and her sister Nettie communicate using letters throughout the novel and the communication takes place simultaneously with the mainstream narration of the novel. Hence, two stories are told within one narration in a way similar to the African way of communicating using proverbs and parables which would have both connotative and denotative meaning. Similarly, the Zambian novel in English, as observed in images from *Day of the Baboons* (Saidi, 1991) that I discuss in Chapter Two, may be the site where multicultural, multidimensional and trans-epochal oral mnemonic devices interact.

The above discussed interaction between indigenous oral literature and the novel in non-settler countries is also evident in India. One would expect an Indian literary culture to be free of western literacy since the colonisers have since left India. However, the presence of the novel in English demonstrates that, for as long as cultures have clashed, one should expect effects of that clash. Although most of the former British India's literature is in Indian languages, oral antecedents of the San-Skrit scripts and other indigenous writing in Indian languages are interwoven into Indian novels in English (Ashcroft, et al., 2004). Techniques of the novels, such as "circling back from the present to the past, of building tale within tale, and persistently delaying climaxes are all features of traditional narration and orature" (Ashcroft, et al., 2004, p. 181). Zambian literature is also subject to such a reality with the novel as a foreign influence from the West, hence the research's focus on the nature of images arising from the interaction of different cultures.

1.3.1 Africanising the Novel
Many African studies and scholars (Chinweizu, et al., 1985) who have discussed the relationship between oral literature and African literature in English are of the view that African novels are solely influenced by oral literature and African culture. This method of analysis is rooted in the belief that 'Africanising' the novel through oral narrative mnemonic images is an act of decolonisation. To begin with, certain ideas by the negritude movement, although condemned by

some scholars such as Wole Soyinka (1976), have had significant influence on African literature in English. The negritude movement advocated for writing which prioritised African experiences, tradition and a black consciousness. In a study on the perpetuation of the negritude movement in contemporary novels, Onwumere and Egblonu (2014, p. 151) envision a unique and incomparable "mystic warmth of African life, gaining strength from its closeness to nature and its constant contact with ancestors" present in the African novel. As a result, one traces in Léopold Senghor's poems *Koras and Balephen* (1977) the love relationship between two traditional musical instruments; *Black Woman* (1977), a nostalgic poem about lost African tradition and *Black Mask* (1977), African pantheism and animism. Following the previous thoughts, it is often assumed that one cannot claim to be African without the inclusion of traditional aspects in their writing. Okpewho (1992) points out the adornment with paralinguistic resources by oral performers as an example of an oral performance aspect opted into African writing. The similarity between the inclusion of traditional musical instruments or traditional black masks in Senghor's written poetry and the use of paralinguistic tools by oral performers confirms that oral literary techniques speak to written literary techniques in Africa. Scholars that have studied the works of Ngugi wã Thiongo or Chinua Achebe also observe the inclination toward oral narrative performance. The use of myths to explain how the two ridges, Kameno and Makuyu came to be or the prophets and prophecies that Chege tells Wayaiki about in *The River Between* (1965) are all examples of oral narrative influence. Furthermore, the inclusion by Chinua Achebe (1958) of 'Africanisms' such as proverbs and songs in his novel, *Things Fall Apart*, are characteristic of indigenous language communication and oral narrative tradition. The novel is not only rich in Igbo proverbs but 'proverbs are the palm wine with which words are written' (Achebe, 1958, p. 3) . Yet the question that arises still is whether these oral literary techniques and material are the only ones present in the contemporary novel in English.

The Negritude movement's idea to create a collective consciousness through literature is strengthened by the fact that the relationship between literature and the society has often been made. The influence of literature on society is witnessed in Manase (2007, pp. 40-41) who discusses how stories in the South African *Staffrider* magazine had the power to evoke lost memories among Johannesburg blacks who had been displaced both physically and psychologically from their homes during Apartheid. The researcher attributes

> …the rise of popular thought and memory making...[to] popular cultural practices such as some of the writings in *Staffrider* and other forms including oral songs and art, dances can act as a medium to show the opposition occurring within a given oppressive socio-economic space. (Manase , 2007, pp.41)

It goes without saying that whether intentionally or not, a particular type of literature has specific influence on a given society. While there is nothing wrong with the recognition of literature as a tool for cultural opposition or writing back to a foreign culture, the problem comes in when one authenticates the artificially created memories as logocentric. It is in similar light that Anderson (2006) coins the term 'imagined communities' in relation to the formation of nations because such communities are socially constructed and designated official status by those in power (Foulcault, 1980). Henceforth, as Mwangi (2009) advises, there is need to steer away from fixity on particular signifieds such as oral narrative ancestry for the novel and engage with other things that authors are doing with the contemporary novel.

The desire to decolonise through the creation of collective memories and the imagined communities that I mention above motivates authors to use mnemonic devices which create a strong artificial memory. In his study of *Two Thousand Seasons*, Sackey (2010) discusses how Ayi Kwei Armah (2000) in his later works undertakes a decisive induction of the African past. Armah goes further than appropriation of the English language by turning the individualistic western novel into the communal African tradition. In an act of memorialising Africa he suggests the slogan 'I think, therefore we are' as more representative than Descarte's 'I think, therefore I am'. In relation to this, Sackey (2010) identifies the use of the 'we' point of view and the characterisation and language in *Two Thousand Seasons* (2000) as supporting collectivism. These mnemonic techniques are strong memorials of indigenous African culture only because indigenous African culture is one of but not the only culture speaking in the novel.

The collective point of view is usually an important aspect in oral art because the performance of oral art involves performer and audience participation. Use of the collective point of view would play a similar unifying role between a novel and its reader but also act as a mnemonic reminder of the interrupted communal nature of African culture. The reminder of the communal nature of African society is evident in the conversations among Armah's characters. In earlier novels such as *The Beautiful Ones are not Yet Born* (1968) communal interest is evident. Statements such as

the one below are included with the aim of evoking a communal past in post-colonial Ghanaian people who have become alienated from one another: "'[a]lone, I am nothing. I have nothing. We have power. But we will never know it; we will never see it work. Unless we choose to come together to make it work. Let us come together… Let us… We…. We…. We…. Freedom…. Freeeeeeedom!'" (Amar, 1968, p. 138). In later novels such as *Two Thousand Seasons* (2000), Onipa Baako's uncle warns him to stick to communal existence and adds that one exists only by being part of a whole (Sackey, 2010). Similarly, throughout Okot p' Bitek's (1985) poem, *Song of Lawino* we witness Lawino's repeated warnings against completely abandoning Acholi traditions. The communal aspect is specifically encapsulated in Chapter 10: '*The Last Safari to Pagak'* where Lawino laments/mocks her husband Ocol's spite of the African communal upbringing in preference for the western one: "Ocol says the way his mother brings up children only leads to ignorance, poverty and disease. He swears he has no confidence in the wisdom of the Acoli" (p'Bitek, 1985, p. 92). The use of the communal aspect as a recurring motif in the latter and the former exemplifies an oral narrative technique of repetition and Sackey (2010, p. 26) notes that "of all the techniques of storytelling repetition as a mnemonic device…is central, giving rise to… formulaic expressions" or mnemonic patterns.

However, one must remember that there are other cultural images and voices speaking in these novels other than the African indigenous voice. Clearly, characters such as Koomson and his wife in *The Beautyful Ones are not yet Born* (1968) or Ocol in *Song of Lawino* (1985) who act westernised are characterised differently from the ones portraying African tradition. Still, the characterisation of the 'man's' railway station workmate who imitates a white man in speech and mannerism is a strong mnemonic character in *The Beautyful Ones are not yet Born*. The ridiculous image of a black man impersonating a white man is not indigenous but may very well become part of a collective memory of the contemporary society in which such people exist. It is, therefore, important to note that collective memory is not made up of images from one culture among the many portrayed in a novel, but from mnemonically strong images regardless of their culture. This study hopes to demonstrate this by subverting the idea of the novel as a literal mirror of oral narratives.

The use of the oral narrative technique is not only demonstrated by repetition as previously discussed but by the use of the storyteller aspect as a mnemonic device in a similar way to the

earlier discussion on Carribean literature. The use of the Gikaandi player as narrator *In Devil on the Cross* (1980) is comparable to the storyteller technique found in African oral narratives (Booker, 1996). Furthermore, Krishnan's (2014) discussion on the function of the storyteller in contemporary Nigerian narratives shows how two contemporary authors, Habila and Abanis create texts which take up the role of storyteller or griot. The observation demonstrates that oral narrative characteristics are present, in a situation where the rules of literacy have taken over the control of language, by creating a communal text. The protagonist, Mamo in Habila's (2007) *Measuring Time* is an unsuccessful writer who fails to write a communal history effectively even when he desires to become a Historian. He eventually writes a play which the accustomed village actors fail to perform because of its written medium. Furthermore, the letters that his twin brother writes are a one sided communication, for Mamo does not write back. Krishnan (2014) concludes that these two instances are indicative of the inadequacy of the written medium to effectively represent history and oral art and to allow for a two-sided communication. Mamo tries to use the storyteller position from oral literature to tell a story but his audience does not understand him because he uses a foreign medium (English). Yet, I suggest that the view that the written medium is ineffective in representing oral art is inadequate and one sided because it does not consider other things such as change in context that may influence images in the novel. In Chapter Three I examine the impact of an analysis based on the desire to shift oral narrative context and interpretation onto the novel in determining the fixity of images in a situation where context changes.

The idea that images in the novel get meaning from the present context is espouced by the ability to find alternative ways of communicating in a space where normal communication or articulation of a fixed signified fails. This is metanarratively demonstrated in Abani's (2007) character named My Luck in *Song for Night* who is deaf and dumb but finds a way to communicate without his voice (Krishnan, 2014). His vocal cords have been purposefully severed to stifle screams, which may result from stepping on a landmine and cause alarm while looking out for landmines that might affect the rest of the army. He and his friends are deaf and cannot use their voices to communicate normally. So they create a type of communication which involves the use of hand gestures. This communication innovation is emblematic of the way post-colonial Africa has no choice but to communicate dialogically in new ways with new cultures. I deconstruct the desire to stick to fixed terms such as identity and oral narrative signified even when it cannot account for

other things such as the deaf boy's alternative communication. In like manner to the acknowledgement of the deaf boy's alternative communication system, I suggest that the analysis of the novel takes note of the other idioms or other 'others' that emerge in the novel, hence my analysis of *The Old Drift* (2019) in Chapter Six of the 'others' while focus is on a fixed signified such as oral narrative influence. This is what I further envision in my study of images from *Ticklish Sensation* (1994) in Chapter Five that are located beyond the confines of the dichotomy of signifier and signified. Therefore, it is the role of the literary critic to identify the different levels of communication in the novel and not only concentrate on one layer.

The review on African novelists establishes that writers borrow techniques such as the oral narrative mnemonic method from oral narrative tradition. However, their role in the novel can only be understood by focusing on their application in the contemporary context (Krishnan, 2014, p. 40) which is heterroglossic and fluid. From what Derrida (1974) intimates in his work, it can be deduced that the contemporary Zambian novelist acts as a bricoleur who gathers fragments from their present society (multicultural) and forms a bricolage with materials that he deems necessary. The result is not something that fits into any category or fixed signifier/signified relationship because interactions are many and constantly changing. The only reason more of the material is from oral art is because orality and literacy exist side by side in many African countries such as Zambia. Pongweni (2001, p. 77) asserts that in today's literate climate, Shona novelists in Zimbabwe, for instance, tap into the oral culture, "being cognizant of the fact that their readership comes from the twilight zone between primary oracy and nascent literacy". It is therefore inadequate to study African literature without considering it in the light of multi-cultural, spatial and temporal influences other than African oral tradition.

1.3.2 Oral Narrative Mnemonic Devices and the Novel
The question of memory and how people recall things does not immediately raise questions with written texts but is inevitable with orality. This is important especially when taking into consideration the need for oral artists to store and remember things from memory. Ong (2002, p. 34) elucidates that:

> In a primary oral culture, to solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving carefully articulated thought, you have to do your thinking in mnemonic patterns, in repetitions or antithesis, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and other formulary expressions, in standard thematic

settings…in proverbs which are constantly heard by everyone so that they come to mind readily and which themselves are patterned for retention and ready recall, or in other mnemonic form.

Naturally, memory enables human beings to remember certain images over others depending on the power that the image has to impress and evoke strong memories from the mind. This means an author must be able to intentionally or unintentionally build images which can stick easily in the mind of readers and transmit a specific memory. Classical memory scholars including Cicero, Quintilian and the anonymous writer of the *Ad Herennium* (Yates, 1966) differentiate between artificial and natural memory. The author of the *Ad Herennium* distinguishes natural and artificial memory in the statement that; "natural memory is that which is engrafted in our minds, born simultaneously with thought. The artificial memory is memory strengthened or confirmed by …the art [of memory]" (Yates, 1966, p. 5). The tendency in orality to hang on to key images and phrases spills over to the written novel even when the pressure of the performance is no longer there, while it is clear that the performance aspect is not a necessity for the written novel. Proponents of the discourse on linearity (Chinweizu, et al., 1985) insist that mnemonic devices are used to create artificial memories in a written text such as the Zambian novel in English, thereby producing and reinforcing desired collective memories among readers. Yet, I argue that there could be other cultures working in the novel and the presence of indigenous oral narrative mnemonic devices could be because the phrases and images used over and over again become part of a linguistic repertoire that is shared by both oral and literate artists.

In his study of Yugoslavian singers of oral tales, Lord (2000) affirms that oral artists are able to recall large amounts of information because of their special technique of composition using formulas or mnemonic devices. Furthermore, scholars such as Milman Parry (1971) that have studied Homer's (1996) *Odyssey* identify the use of mnemonic patterns as the only reason Homer could have been able to produce such an oral masterpiece. Writing in 'verse' or 'episodic' writing, which literacy has taught us to be verse or episode, is actually a formula used for the sake of recalling (Ong, 1982). The same conclusion can be made about some of the monsters encountered by Odysseus. It is not easy to forget the one eyed Cyclop, or the name of the singing sirens, or let alone the six headed Scylla that swallows six men (Homer, 1996). Similar characterisation is seen in the oral narration of the *Ozidi Saga* (a Nigerian myth), whose narrator, Opekwho (2004) suggests, uses formulae to recall the giant of twenty arms, and twenty legs or the scrotum king

with an enormous scrotum which Ozidi fights with. Evidently, the verses, episodes and vivid characterisation used in written novels are actually mnemonic patterns from oral literature.

There are many studies that have been done on oral mnemonic devices and how they function in oral narratives. Okpewho (2004), in line with Ong (1982) and Lord (2000), postulates the need for mnemonic strategies in narrating lengthy oral epics like *The Ozidi Saga*. Among these devices are vivid characterisation, the use of episodes and the repetitive nature of the fights. In his earlier work, *Oral Literature in Africa*, Okpewho (1992, p. 76) points out how repetition is used in oral art not only as a refrain in poems and songs but:

> …certain phrases or lines – even a whole framework of details – are used over and over again for constructing successive stages in the story. This technique has been found to be particularly useful in the performance of longer narratives…In oral literary scholarship, such a stock phrase or statement repeatedly used has been called the formula, while the framework of details has been called a theme, which is an extended formula.

Conventions such as the opening formula of Limba story telling (Finnegan, 2012) or in the telling of the Ozidi Saga only become conventions because they have been continuously used to help with the flow of the story such that they, together with other images and phrases, have become a pool of cultural specific resources that authors can use (Okepwho, 1992). This study investigates how novelists adapt mnemonic techniques, such as vivid characterisation and repetition, in the multicultural and fluid context of the novel.

Koopman (2001) discusses the movement of images within Zulu praise poetry with the aim of finding out how they become convention. The repetition of certain images within the same poem and from one poem to another calls for the question on whether a formula has been followed. The research gives four reasons for movement of images in Zulu poetry and one of them is that "…certain phrases become part of the Zulu lexicon and may reside in the subconscious of a poet, to be retrieved when needed without the poet being aware of where it comes from" (Koopman, 2001, p. 149). Furthermore, there is a possibility that authors can consciously draw their material from a pool of images. It is also conceivable for someone to create new images from nature but because the images are picked up from the same repertoire (by authors with a common cultural background); they tend to be similar (Koopman, 2001). Some pertinent observations that are relevant to my study can be made from the above study. The idea of tracing the movement of

images within Zulu poetry is similar to mapping out schematic narratives (this will be discussed in detail later in the chapter). This is related to the synchronic and diachronic variations of chronotopes observed in images in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) and *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) in Chapter Four. While this analysis is done on oral literature and concerns a specific culture, the present study involves the novel which has more than one culture involved in it. Further, while the assumption is that poets draw their images from a pool of images, it must be noted that the pool of images in the novel is an ever changing one.

Many studies have been done on oral narratives as part of the broader Zambian oral tradition and from the perspective and emphasis of other disciplines. For instance, anthropologists studied oral narratives for their social function, linguists for the language and theologians for religious reasons other than the literary focus. In one case, Maxwell (1983) considers myth and the oral narrative form in the context of theology. Maxwell (1983, p. IV) collected Bemba myths in an attempt to show how they are transformed by the coming of literacy. He also shows how one royal spirit, Lesa was "… stripped of maternal or terrestrial imagery and elevated to God-father-in-heaven doctrine by literate missionaries" (IV). The connotation here is that the Bemba religious culture is disrupted. It must be noted that transformations of the nature described by Maxwell (1983) are not entirely detrimental and may in fact be the birth of new images. Viewed from this light, the transformation of the 'Lesa' imagery may not necessarily be 'stripping' but appropriate change which fits into the present context. The tendency to force a linear continuation from orality is what I deconstruct in this study with the intention to show that the interaction between different cultures, chronotopes and images from different places produces new images.

Pedagogy is the attention of Mwelwa (2016) and Ng'andu's (2009) research. Mwelwa's (2016) collection of seventy Bemba oral narratives, which is documented in a bilingual anthology (Bemba and English), provides an approach to teaching literature in English at high school level. Although the intention here is to highlight the need for the inclusion of Zambian oral narratives, there is consideration that it is not the only cultural force at play in the present society. The choice of oral narratives as a tool for teaching literature in English demonstrates an acknowledgement that education must be relevant to cultural context. In this case, the Zambian society is multicultural. Ng'andu (2009) studies Bemba oral narratives from a musical perspective. Ng'andu views *inshimi Bemba* tradition as having potential for a new dimension of musical art education. In the third

chapter of his PhD thesis titled *Inshimi: Bemba Story Telling* (2009, pp. 48-87), he gives a deep analysis of some Bemba oral narratives that are infused with songs in an attempt to achieve his aims. In the process, he coincidentally conveys important aspects of oral mnemonic devices. Ng'andu (2009) explains how inshimi function as communal memory because people get in touch with their identity during the *inshimi* (story-telling) session through cultural archetypes. In addition, *inshimi* is "… reconstructed from a set of built-in networks of structures such that each inshimi draws the specific content from an already functioning mental set-up for inshimi" (Ng'andu, 2009, p. 67). The research considers songs as examples of built-in networks and notes further that "song provides a mnemonic device for the community to learn the elements of culture" (2009, p. 71) just as familiar idiophones do. The research acknowledges the use of cultural archetypes to create communal memory. However, we must not simply assume that present day Zambian culture will simply assimilate mnemonic images even when they are not relevant to the post-colonial cultural context. As time goes by, those images that are not needed fall off while new ones are born and these cannot represent any fixed oral narrative signified.

Songs do not only provide communal memory but also aid a story-teller's memory during a performance. Sumaili (1982) asserts that during performance sessions of Nsenga oral narratives from the Eastern province of Zambia, which he recorded, "…it was not uncommon for members of the audience to request the performer to narrate that chisilili [tale] which has such and such nzimbo [song]…whenever the performer forgot the story, only a few lines of the nzimbo would be sung to… refresh the performer's memory" (1982, p. 43). Observations of Tonga oral narratives, from the Southern Province of Zambia affirm that specific songs are associated with particular oral narratives. Siakavuba (1989) agrees with Sumaili in the observation that "…except in very peculiar cases narrative songs are intransferable…each one and its various versions go with a particular narrative" (1989, p. 36). Consequently, songs play the role of mnemonic device for the story-teller who is able to remember a narrative by associating a particular song with it. Yet the reality that songs are 'intransferable' suggests that one should not imagine that once such an image is transferred to the novel in a different context the song's meaning remains the same. Hence, despite the role that songs play to both storyteller and audience memory for specific narratives, I explore in Chapter Three whether songs evoke the same memory when they are

translated or imported verbatim into the novel such as *The Chosen bud* (Luangala, 1991) where the context changes and differànce is instituted.

Furthermore, oral mnemonic devices include the use of metaphors and other figures of speech, which are familiar to both performer and audience. Siakavuba (1989) illustrates this with the emphasis on the use of familiar times and places in Tonga narratives. Cancel's (1981; 2013) work is also of great significance. Although Cancel does not specifically call them mnemonic devices, he discusses the use of characters' names such as *fipindile* (one who turns things around). Nevertheless, a consideration of Okepwho's (1992) definition of mnemonic devices shows that a character whose name matches his character would aid a performer in remembering details of a narrative, especially if those characteristics are key to the plot. In addition, the use of a familiar opening and closing formula such as "there was a little thing" (Cancel, 2013) which is echoed by Siakavuba (1989), Opekwho (1992), Ng'andu (2009) and Finnegan (2012) is ingrained in a group's identity and collective memory. In relation to this, Cancel (2013) mentions how a story's basic plot can recall several other tales found among the Tabwa, Bemba and Lamba[5] people. Novelists are able to draw material for their novels from the pool of these familiar resources and turn them into mnemonic devices for people's culture and identity. However, mnemonic devices from the past are only used in subsequent works if they appeal to the present society. Unfamiliar images will be weak mnemonically if they are unfamiliar to the target society. These are some of the issues that this study hopes to raise by deconstructing the idea of linear movement of oral narrative images from one era to another.

The use of familiar images as mnemonic devices is substantiated by research on some *Bemba* oral narratives from the Northern part of Zambia. In one didactic Tabwa narrative, proverbs are used repeatedly:

> *ninshi ninkulungwe yali umwaka umo* (He will be like the bush buck with only a year to live) Kalulu uses it and the lion cubs repeat it to their father…*umusha afwa ne fyebo mukanwa* (a slave dies with his words in his mouth). This is twice addressed to the bushbuck too…they are woven into the fabric of the tales connotations. (Cancel, 2013, p. 61)

The sayings are probably repeated because they contribute to the moral of the tale and serve as a warning against gullibility and envy. The teaching will only be effective if the proverbs used are

appropriate and familiar to the culture involved. Pongweni (2001, p. 179) states that in the "… sine qua non of folklore performance: even as she is repeating portions of text for the benefit of her young audience, the narrator is training them to commit to memory, so that they retain the content". The proverbs then act as a medium for communal memory because they evoke images ingrained in the collective memory or cultural corpus of wise sayings.

The idea of clinging to certain mnemonic images and creating collective memories with familiar proverbs, names, places and so on makes sense for oral narratives where the emphasis is on memory. For the novel, which is born out of a more open society, the fixity on certain images for memoriability becomes more of a theoretical social construct which I argue in Chapter Five is often different from the unstable in-between space of reality. This is because as Bakhtin (1981, p. 2) postulates the novel represents society's "interdeterminancy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary writing". This study discusses how images born from such a multi-cultural and multi-temporal society create images that are never a simple replication and linear continuation from indigenous pre-colonial oral narrative images as espoused by decolonialists. The relationship between oral narratives has often been made but often from the point of view of them being referents and custodians of frozen images from oral narratives discussed above. In fact this is related to my view that sociological and anthropological perspectives (Finnegan, 2012) are at the centre of the perpetuation of the decolonial and nationalist insistence that frozen oral narrative images in the novel are necessary for restoration of pre-colonial collective cultural memories. This is because of their emphasis on the the social role of oral narratives and their images at the expense of analysing images in the novel as independent artistic creations. On the contrary, I discuss the images in the novel to investigate the often assumed role that oral narrative mnemonic images play in framing the novel in English. Furthermore, I explore the heteroglossic, chronotopic, deffered, unstable images in selected novels in English and establish whether they fit into the umbrella term of oral narrative identity often designated to them.

1.3.3 'Zambianising' the novel in English
What I term 'Zambianising' the novel in English is an attempt in post-colonial Zambian literary circles to make the novel Zambian and decolonise it from the western novel by purposely assimilating oral literary material. This is influenced by arguments by scholars such as Chinweizu et al (1985) and Chinua Achebe (1975) that the authentic pre-colonial culture can only be evoked,

created and restored through emphasis in both theory and practice on culture carrying oral narrative mnemonic images in the novel. The argument put forth is that in many parts of Africa such as Zambia, orality and literacy co-exist; as a result, oral literature influences the African novelist, whether intentionally or unintentionally. The western novel is alienated from the reader with regards to composition, transmission and actualisation.[6] Hence, Africa does not need the colonial novel which is "clearly a print genre, deeply interior, de-heroicized and tending strongly to irony. Present day de-plotted narrative forms are part of the electronic age deviously structured in obtruse codes" (Ong, 1982, p. 159). The argument underscores that the type of novel needed in Africa is one that speaks to the peoples' oral culture and promotes distinct national identity. Derrida (1974) rejects logocentric thought because of its insistence that orality is prior to writing, while scholars such as Ong (2002) and Finnegan (2012) view the novel as a sign of the transition from orality to writing. Similarly, proponents of decolonialism (Chinweizu, et al., 1985) view adoption of the western novel as a sign of cultural domination because it interrupts linear progression from oral narratives by introducing an alien art form. Hence, a sense of cultural ownership comes from associating images in the novel to oral narrative mnemonic devices and images at the expense of anything else happening in the novel, while accepting the general idea of the novel.

The Zambian novel in English and its role in cultural documentation can be traced back to the upsurge of literacy which coincided with the wave of nationalism and independence elsewhere in Africa. During this time, there emerged a great nationalist interest to document oral narratives and write novels in indigenous languages for use in schools. With this, also came the desire to write novels with rich cultural content in an attempt to create a distinct Zambian identity both locally and abroad (Dathorne, 1974). The government also provided support, as noted in the establishment of the first government-owned Kenneth Kaunda Foundation in 1966 (Chilala, 2014), which contributed significantly to the publication of literature during the first two decades of independence. The foundation is behind some of the earliest publications with cultural influence such as Adreya Masiye's (1971) *Before Dawn.* At the same time, Dominic Mulaisho's *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 1971) was published in the same year under the Heinemann African Writer's series. In fact Primorac (2014, p. 588) makes the following comments about *Tongue of the Dumb*:

> …by appropriating and fusing an Achebe-inspired thematic with a combination of popular plot-making and an Anglophone version of Mpashian moralism, *The Tongue of the Dumb* manages to

combine nation-building cultural pride with a nuanced and forward-looking cosmopolitan thoughtfulness that is arguably far ahead of its time.

The implication here, therefore, is that there is a relationship between Zambian novels and pre-colonial oral literary culture. Yet, the fact that this is mixed with a certain cosmopolitanism means that both the past and present are reflected in the novel. This makes it impossible to imagine images in the novel as frozen entities passed on from indigenous pre-colonial oral narratives and tradition.

To date, research on Zambian novels in English continues to show both an intentional and unintentional borrowing from the oral narrative tradition. Here, the oral narrative is representative of all oral art forms because it utilises genres and techniques such as poetry, proverbs, songs and witticisms. The continued existence of a large population in Zambia's rural areas has led the common occurrence of the telling of family stories in the evening (Ngandu, 2009; Finnegan, 2012; Cancel, 2013). In addition, oral narratives and songs are still part of girls' puberty and pre-marriage ceremonies in both urban and rural areas (Dauphin-Tinturier, 2001). The need for national autonomy has led to the emphasis on pre-colonial oral literature as an embodiment of Zambian culture in many areas of study. Yet, many of these studies only go as far as mentioning the oral narrative techniques present in the novel without analysing the nature of the images themselves and how they are articulated in the context of the novel. So far, there is no existing study on the Zambian novel in English and its relationship to images born out of the literate, multicultural and fluid Zambian society. Many of the existing studies (Mbwayu, 1987; Chilala, 2016) propose that the Zambian novels in English use mnemonic devices from pre-colonial oral literature which are frozen in time. It is assumed that these images remain constant regardless of other cultural influences and they simply move from one novel to another in that state.

Many researchers support the call for more studies which recognise the influence of culture in written literature. In studying *The Cultural Factor in the Semiotics of Contemporary African Drama*, Chilala (2012) whose study includes a Zambian play, *The Black Mamba* by Kasoma (1976), agrees that the study of African literature requires an understanding of the cultural context of the work. Yet, we observe that in many contemporary African societies, context does not entail influence from a single culture. It is important that there is eclectic consideration of the different cultural intersections in a specific society. Specifically, Zambian culture is made up of images born out of a mixture of many different cultures and epochs. The novel acts as an agent of the

consolidated culture through the mnemonic devices that it adds to the corpus of culture. It is from such a complex fluidity and diversity that a distinct collective memory is born together with a " sense of difference which constitutes each national literature's mode of self- apprehension and its claim to be a self-constituting entity", (Ashcroft, et al., 2004, p. 6). Hence, what one insists on calling Zambian collective or cultural memory based on oral narrative mnemonic devices in the novel can only be imagined or socially constructed by the powers that be. In other words, and as I attempt to illustrate in Chapter Six, artificial public memories are authorised by the comprador intelligentsia or in this case a discourse on linearity that designates a voice to oral narrative influence. This occurs at the expense of all other images born out of a combination of different cultural forces in the novel. An understanding of multi-cultural societies, such as Zambia, assists in achieving an adequate study of the use of oral narrative mnemonic devices in the novel in English. Okpewho (1992, p. 10) underscores the need to "truly understand the language and culture from which a piece of…literature … to explain its literary qualities so that an outsider can appreciate it". This study therefore intends to examine the creation of images out of the many cultural forces involved. Considered here is the significance of Derrida's (1978) metaphor of a bricolage in the analysis of the Zambian context in novels such as *Patchwork* (Banda-Aako, 2011) examined in Chapter Two.

Research on Zambian novels in English, such as the ones reviewed in this section (Mbwayu, 1987; Chirwa, 1985; Chilala, 2016), confirm that Zambian novelists use the language and narrative technique of oral literature in their work. Yet, most of them do not consider the complex interaction between oral narrative devices and the contemporary novel in English. Chilala (2016), for instance, suggests that African and Zambian authors in particular borrow intentionally from oral tradition by following Achebe's method of appropriation. The scholar calls the appropriation of English by African authors, "Calibanism". This is in reference to Shakespeare's character Caliban who, being the slave to Prospero and his daughter Miranda in *The Tempest*, learns the master's language and uses it as a form of resistance against his oppressors. In a similar way, Chilala (2016) suggests that most writers of African fiction in post-colonial Africa have adopted this kind of writing. Two Zambian novels, *Before Dawn* and *The Chosen Bud* (1991), are cited in relation to the use of "Calibanism." Chilala (2016, p. 66) includes the two texts in his conclusion that "… although written in English, the novels occasionally use words and expressions from the Zambian

indigenous linguistic repertoire… the novels serve as archives of Zambian tradition and culture." This identification of the influence of 'indigenous linguistic repertoire' suggests that there is a relationship between the novel and the language used in oral narratives. Chilala cites Masiye's (1971) choice in *Before Dawn* of using interjections such as " ai-yoh!" to make the painful experience as authentic as possible and mentions that in *Tongue of the Dumb*, "… there is generous use of interjections that are peculiarly Zambian: among them "… eh, hu, woo… 'Dulani responds by greeting Lubinda: I'm well, oh you are still a strong man eh?" (Chilala, 2016, p. 67). The observation that the novels serve as archives of Zambian tradition and culture affirms the proposed research's assertion that familiar figures of speech or oral mnemonic devices are used in the novel as Zambian cultural mementos. Nonetheless, my study diverts from this conclusion by suggesting that familiar figures of speech in the contemporary novel may comprise of cultures and interactions other than indigenous Zambian ones.

The presence of expressions such as 'ai-yoh' in *Before Dawn* (1971) discussed above must not be wrongly construed as evidence of influence of one indigenous Zambian language. We need to realise that images are only retained in a culture if they are relevant. Over time, some memories fall off while others remain depending on mnemonic strength. Others have fallen out of the linguistic corpus such that they are not used anymore or have been replaced by others. Thus, my analysis of *The Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) in Chapter Five focuses on the nature of the images in an attempt to test the argument of the linearity of oral narrative images (signified) into the novel. Other methods, images and terms such as 'uppermwamba' (high class people), which Chirwa (1985) mentions as used in the urban areas of the Zambian Short Stories in English come up in the multicultural context. The word is made up of 'upper' (English) and 'mwamba' (Nyanja) and is part of the informal English vocabulary. Such a word did not exist in either the English or Nyanja vocabulary. This means it has no relationship to a fixed logocentre such as oral narrative tradition and language. It is for this reason that this study approaches images in the novel as signifiers without forcing them on any absolute signifier such as oral narratives.

The aspect of mnemonic strength can similarly apply to untranslated words[7] as an effective way of coercing the memory of one's culture. The fact that the interjections in *Before Dawn* are left untranslated resonates with Mbwayu's (1987) observations regarding the use of words from the indigenous language. This is in the case where a matter is brought to the village discussion podium

in Masiye's *Before Dawn*: 'I bring it to the mbwalo because many rainy seasons have gone by since Menyani's household received a male child' (1987, p. 59). Many post-colonial novelists do not translate some words or phrases in their work as a way of asserting their traditional roots. Determining time in novels using traditional methods is one way of evoking traditional culture. Mbwayu (1987) discusses how time is measured in *Tongue of the Dumb* using the African method of moons. Chirwa (1985) also picks this in Mubitana's *Song of the Rain Maker* and describes the time when a sacrifice would be offered: "offerings of maize would be made to the rain spirit that very evening and the ceremony would take place in front of his house at a time when the eye could see no farther than the tree of the crowing mamba in the west'" (Chirwa, 1985, p. 82). Chirwa (1985, p. 82) concludes that the "… idiom of village characters such as those quoted above have functional significance over and above merely flavouring the texts, certainly for the characters and the cultural group they claim to be". The current research takes the discussion further by extending Chirwa's (1985) conclusion on the Short Story in Zambia to the Zambian novel in English. These methods will only evoke or induce tradition if they are mnemonically appropriate to the society. I therefore, question the power of some ethnically and regionally specific oral mnemonic devices in evoking memory in the novel and its more cosmopolitan audience, as shown in the analysis in Chapters three and four, where I challenge the idea that every oral narrative image can be passed on from oral narratives to the novel in fixed form.

Most of the reviewed literature also considers repetition, which is an element from oral narrative tradition. Most Zambian novelists manipulate this technique by using multiple perspectives to narrate the same event as evidenced in both Mbwayu's (1987) study of *Tongue of the Dumb* and my (2015) earlier research on narrative technique in *The Chosen Bud*. Mbwayu explains how shifting focalisation is used in *Tongue of the Dumb* and that "… at the risk of repetition, the story is focalized through Katenga, Kawala, Mrs Kawala, Ray Norris, Governor, Baker, Mrs Eckland and Malherbe among others" (1987, p. 35). Similarly, in John Luangala's (1991) *The Chosen Bud*, "… variable focalisation is used because the narrative is told from different characters' perspectives. These are Sicholo's, Chinsamba's, Luponda's, Nanzama's and Kalimbambo's" (Siluonde, 2015). Yet, my discussion on repetitions in *The Chosen Bud* (Luangala, 1991) show that repeated images even from oral narratives can only be the same and never identical. This is because of deferral which adds or supplements something to the repeated image while it retains a

trace of the original signified. Similarly, the repetition of narratives such as Leira's death in *The Chosen Bud* (Luangala, 1991) leads to difference and the deferment of voice because each of the versions add their own version or supplement making the versions different from each other. Hence, repetitions only institute differance because they either carry traces of the past and the supplement added to the image by the present. This makes it impossible for such images to be identical to anything that comes before them such as an oral narrative signified or logocentre.

The characterisation in many novels is similar to the mnemonic and vivid characterisation of earlier mentioned oral works, *The Odyssey* and the *Ozidi Saga*. This is evidenced in Zambian novels by the use of caricature and comical description of characters. In *Tongue of the Dumb*, one character, Brother Arupe, is described as:

> … a small man with a weather-beaten scaly skin, hairy arms, and a back curved into a bow from lifting heavy bags and stones, his head was pointed and only at the apex was there any sign of visible hair growth. He was so light that sitting before the enormous organ he looked like an ugly little sparrow treading on a heap of maize. (1987, p. 43)

Here, again we witness a cultural mix of images suggestive of Heteroglossia (Bahktin, 1981; 1984). Part of the description of the man is the image of a small man 'sitting before an enormous organ' and the organ is not an indigenous Zambian musical instrument. The image is appropriate to a contemporary Zambian context in which the musical instrument is not out of place. Clearly this is the combination of both indigenous Zambian and foreign culture which have come together as demonstrated by the image from the novel. Hence, an analysis of the novel must not simply end at vivid characterisation, but must go deeper into analysis of the mnemonic or vivid images resulting in vivid characterisation.

It is clear from the studies discussed so far that there is a relationship between the Zambian novel in English and indigenous Zambian oral tradition. Chirwa (1985), Mbwayu (1987) and Chilala (2016) discuss the influence of oral narratives and indigenous tradition from an angle of the Zambian linguistic repertoire. Oral narrative mnemonic techniques, such as vivid imagery, characterisation, repetition, familiar allusions and idioms, are cited as evidence of pre-colonial cultural influence. This study deconstructs the idea that the actual images used in the novels are specifically from pre-colonial indigenous culture. This is done by investigating the oral narrative

mnemonic methods used in the Zambian novel, which are the product of multilingual and multicultural resources from contemporary Zambian culture. Furthermore, the study aims at investigating these mnemonic images to determine the type of images born out of a culturally contending space.

From both the practical and methodological perspective, no information exists on the relationship between writing , culturally diverse and fluid mnemonic devices, and i the framing of the novels under study. Although there have been studies which engage with Zambian oral narratives and the Zambian novel in English (Dathorne, 1974; Chirwa, 1985; Mbwayu, 1987; Chilala, 2012 and 2016), they all attribute the images found in novels to Zambian indigenous tradition only. Aspects such as archetypal characterisation and repetition are cited as an influence on the novel but the conclusion in most cases has been that this influence is from the indigenous language and oral tradition generally. While some studies (Sumaili, 1982; Siakavuba, 1989; Ngandu, 2009 and Cancel, 2013) consider oral narrative mnemonic devices, they do not include the novel. In addition, these studies do not analyse the relationship between mnemonic devices and the diverse society of the novel. Accordingly, the dynamics of multicultural mnemonic aids in the novel has not been considered and hence this study.

1.4 Deconstruction and Other Theoretical Considerations

The literature review carried above indicates that, in both theory and practice, researchers have chosen to emphasise the oral literary/indigenous traditional inspiration at the expense of other cultural influences in the novel. This direction gives the false picture that the Zambian novel in English is a mere linear continuation from the oral narrative.This study deconstructs the view that the Zambian novel in English is a linear progression from oral narratives. As a result, the study investigates how the multicultural and fluid oral narrative mnemonic devices frame selected Zambian novels in English. Oral narrative mnemonic tools are aide-memoires for the storyteller but also evoke communal memory in the audience during an oral narrative performance. The supposition of this study is that the oral narrative mnemonic technique is sometimes used in the novel but the images themselves are not a linear continuum from pre-colonial oral narrative and indigenous Zambian tradition. Rather, the images in the novel are born out of a multicultural and fluid society comprising different Zambian ethnic groups and western culture.

1.4.1 Derridan Deconstruction

The overarching approach which governs the assumptions of this study is Jacques Derrida's (1974) Deconstruction approach. Although Derrida's deconstruction is a reaction to philosophical and Structuralist thought, it highlights important considerations for the analysis and relationship between orality and the Zambian novel in English. Derrida's deconstruction:

> …project grows out of a fundamental challenge to the traditions of Western philosophy. In particular, he [Derrida] argues that this philosophy is consistently informed by what he refers to as "logocentric" or "metaphysical thinking—is the notion…that there is an ultimate centre and ground to philosophical truth. Derrida notes that logocentric logic sees language as a reflection of some pre-existing meaning or reality. (Booker, 1996, p. 57)

The assumption is that all language originates from an omniscient centre of knowledge (logos) or God. Therefore, any approach which challenges the logo centric idea of fixed meaning and origins is synonymous with Derrida's deconstruction.

1.3.1.1 Logocentrism and Binary Opposition

One logocentric premise rejected by Derrida (1974) is that every human being is born with a natural aspect of language which is passed on from God himself (the centre). Speech is considered as the result of a breach in the confines of the God-given natural language while writing is perceived a consequence of a break from the closure of speech. Consequently, speech is considered a symbol of natural language (mental experience) while writing is a symbol of speech. Speech is considered to be in closer proximity to natural language and truth, since it comes before writing, according to this sequence. Therefore, speech is considered more reliable than writing, which is further away from the truth. Writing is viewed as: "the outside, the exterior representation of language and this thought-sound. It must necessarily operate from already constituted units of signification, in the formation of which it has played no part" (Derrida, 1974, p. 36). Hence, writing does not make any rules but simply operates as a sign of the more authentic language ensconced in speech and the natural language of the mind.

The above is the basis of structuralist thought, specifically Ferdinand Saussure's *La parole* (spoken speech) and *la langue* (rules of language) (de Saussure, 1959; Derrida, 1974; Booker, 1996) which is a distinction between spoken and written language respectively. The theory is more concerned with how the latter operates to create meaning. Following the idea that writing is a symbol of the

spoken word, writing is equated to a sign of the spoken language, which comprises of a signifier (word) and the signified [a concept or meaning invoked by the signifier] (Booker, 1996, p. 57) but these have an arbitrary and not a synonymous relationship with each other. Both logocentrism and Structuralism and their preoccupation with inside/outside, signifier/signified, speech/writing promote the idea of binary opposites. The concept, binary opposition, refers to two related concepts that are eternally opposed. Besides the ones already outlined, one can point to concepts of good/bad, left/right/ and up/down that are considered as constantly opposing each other and, the absence of one member of the pair means the presence of the other pair. This is again related to Aristotle's view of noncontradiction – that one thing cannot be two things at the same time (Booker, 1996, p. 59). The idea of presence and absence resonates with Heidegger's idea of being and presence (Derrida, 1974). This is the proposal that things are considered as 'being' because their presence is felt in the present moment (temporal presence). Of the speech/writing pair, speech is considered more as presence of language because both the speaker and listener are present and so the language situation is best represented by speech. Writing which is exterior to speech represents absence —the absence of the language situation which is found in speech (being). This is related to the assumption that images in the novel (as absence of speech or oral narratives) represent oral narrative images as a presence located outside of both the image and the novel.

1.3.1.2 Deconstructing Logocentric Thought

Derrida subverts both structuralist and logocentric considerations in his deconstruction approach. Of essence here is his rejection of the idea of a universal origin or a central truth. He is influenced by Freidrich Nietzsche's view that the centre of truth is "an X which remains inaccessible and indefinable for us" (Nietzsche, 1979, p. 83). Derrida illustrates this using the logocentric relationship between natural language, speech and writing. Writing is considered the sign which signifies speech (signified), meaning speech would be considered the centre of truth in this situation. Yet, in another case, speech is but a symbol of mental experience and in this pair the latter will represent a more authentic truth. Derrida postulates that:"In this play of representation, the point of origin becomes ungraspable. These are things like reflecting pools, and images, an infinite reference from one to another, but no longer a source, a spring" (Derrida, 1974, p. 36). In the end, all we have are signifiers or being which is one minute present and another absent. The decolonial attempts to recapture a pristine pre-colonial literature reflects the preoccupation with a logocentric truth or origin. Particularly, the idea that indigenous African and Zambian oral

narrative mnemonic images are always replicated in the contemporary novel exactly as they are. Such an approach is insufficient for an eclectic study of the Zambian novel in English because it does not consider other cultures which intersect in the novel.

Many studies on minority cultures are related to this notion of a universal origin for all human beings. Wessels (2006, p. 25) ascertains that:

> … the obsession with a primordial state of unity, proclaimed or repressed, has provided the principal impetus for the study of aboriginals as well as a perennial source of images for successive installations of the primitive…in the imaginative galleries…the myth of a lost origin underlies Western thought and invests in it with unacknowledged metaphysical premises.

This view is substantiated by earlier theories about evolution, such as Darwin and Frazer's which considered pre-colonial African societies as "… early forms out of which aspects of modern culture developed and the stages through which they passed in this development" (Okpewho, 1992, p. 6). Western society is considered as the most advanced and therefore the yardstick by which modernity is measured.

The preoccupation with placing different societies at different stages of evolution leads to scholars making broad statements and assumptions based on original indigenous voices which are eternally out of range. In his study of IXam narratives, Wessels (2006) observes and at the same time deconstructs the idea of narratives which are passed on from a mythological origin without traces of shifting context or foreign cultural contact over time. The scholar argues that one needs to consider the different contexts in which different narratives are told in order to make a reliable contribution to the study of IXam narratives. As Wessels (2006) observes, concerning narratives told by prisoners who had been displaced from their homes by imprisonment, "the alien setting and absence of the usual interaction of fellow IXam speakers already familiar with the stories and their references militated against narrative spontaneity and continuity" (2006, p. 25). This is similar to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) observation concerning the deterrritorialisation or uprooting of a culture from one geographical space and by extension the spatial and temporal movement of oral narratives to the novel. In both cases, the movement results in the desire to mark a new territory. Yet, in a way similar to how the new context affects the frozen transfer of IXam narratives, this reterritorialisation is never a linear and fixed one. Thus, my study of public places

in *Day of the Baboons* (Saidi, 1991) in my second chapter considers the ways in which the shebeen stands out as a site of reterritorialisation and the various cultural clashes and challenges involved. Interestingly, Soja (1989) observes that postmodern geographies, such as Los Angeles, can no longer be related to a situation where certain geographical areas are synonymous with a certain class of people or characteristics. Instead, the modern city, in a similar way to the adaption and merging of IXam narratives of different cultures in reterritorialisation, are a combination of many classes of people in different areas. These observations can be extended to the movement of oral narrative mnemonic images from one generation to another. One cannot simply assume that the mnemonic images are static regardless of cultural interaction.

Furthermore, by portraying Europe as the ideal modern society, Africa and other societies are propagated as Europe's 'other' (Mwangi, 2009; Musila, 2008). This is based on Said's (1978) idea of orientalism and othering where the empire's identity was justified and depended on stereotyping and excluding others (as different from them). This is once again related to Lacan's (1992) view that identity is based on fixation on an external image because of human inherent helplessness related to self-identity. This creates a situation where a person identifies themselves with a certain fixed image, while excluding or othering anything that does not fit into this category. More so, as Spivak (1988) observes in her work on the subaltern, the people in power (in this case proponents of the discourse on linearity) or what Appiah (1991) terms the comprador intelligentsia, designate themselves at the centre. The centre becomes the space where the others are excluded (the subaltern) because the dorminant discourse is forced on them while they are silenced. Similarly, the influence of colonial narratives about Africa has meant that:

> …there still exists an enduring master-narrative of modernity which clings to an unyielding Africa-Europe binary. In this binary, Africans are scripted playing catch-up to a normative European modernity; while African realities continue to be read through distinctively Eurocentric epistemological lenses and invariably found wanting. (Musila, 2008, p. 17)

This means that a blind eye is given to the changes which have taken place in African literature and society over time. A novel which combines both Western and African culture is unthinkable. As a result, the stereotype of an "African moral faculty… [which] fails to survive beyond the child-like 'noble savage' stage" (Musila, 2008, p. 193) have been cemented. These views are forwarded because of the metropolitan centre and by extension the discourse on linearity's (and its

proponents) lack of in-depth awareness of the happenings in former colonies, just as the colonised seemed to know more about the colonisers than they did about the colonised. This reality is explained by Musila (2008) in her interesting allusion to Ferdinand Oyono's *Houseboy* (1966) in which the Europeans had no knowledge of life in the African compound, while the Africans, through the Europeans' servants, had a lot of information about their colonial masters.

According to metropolitan (as centre controlling discourse) thought (Musila, 2008), Africa resists European modernity through factors such as continuing with its oral literary tradition in novels. Africa is portrayed as always resisting Western modernism and an African version of Western nationalism has been cited as evidence of this eternal resistance. The idea of backwardness in literature is justified by the "…consistent attempt in Third World texts to contribute to the development of national cultural identities in post-colonial states by creating coherent images of such identities in literary texts" (Booker, 1996, p. 156). Hence, by advancing a novel, which is purely a written version of the oral narrative, both European and African scholars promote (in most cases unintentionally) the image of an African novel that will always be behind the more advanced Western novel.

The preceding views lead to thinking of societies in pairs of more developed and less developed. This is related to Derrida's rejection of the structuralist idea of binary opposites. Jacques Derrida's (1974) position on binary opposition substantiates the on-going discussion that we consider the Zambian novel in English without privileging one approach or cultural position over another. According to Derridan thought, the:

> … "either-or" logic that leads directly to the habit of dualistic thinking (or division of all aspects of life into binary sets of opposed category)…such dualistic thinking is impoverishing; it cannot encompass the complexity and richness of language and its products, which do not fall neatly into either- or categories… Derrida finds that dualistic thought inevitably leads to hierarchisation, with one pole valued over the other. He therefore seeks to undermine, or deconstruct, binary opposition throughout his work, typically by showing that the two poles are not metrically opposed but mutually involved. (Booker, 1996, pp. 59-60)

It is not surprising then to witness post-colonial scholars choosing a side when faced with the choice of both Western or indigenous tradition and literature.

The effects of dualistic thinking are evident in the way many critics who support the relationship between oral narratives and the novel agree that modern writers do not robotically imitate oral literature but with reservations. Mwangi (2009, p. 107) states that "The general subtext is nevertheless that modern Literature forms an unbroken continuum with pre-colonial oral literature" and language. Ngugi wã Thiongo (2003) is of the view that the only way to liberate African literature is to get back to the past and write in our vernacular languages as a means to achieve the decolonisation of the mind. He leads by example in his writing of novels such as *The River Between* (1965), *Devil on the Cross* (1980), Matigari (1987) and *Wizard of the Crow* (2006) in Kikuyu.[8] Yet, this suggestion warrants some questions in that even if one writes a novel in the indigenous language, the novel as a written form is still not a feature of pre-colonial Africa as earlier demonstrated. Hence, whether the desire is to return to a pre-colonial literature through language or technique, this kind of decolonisation project is challenged. Orality and writing, as this study and Derrida (1974) suggests, interact to create something which cannot easily be separated into opposites of indigenous or colonised writing. Other scholars (Soyinka, 1976; Achebe, 2003) agree that if the intention of the call to write in indigenous African languages is emancipation, then it falls short. Wole Soyinka (1976, p. 62) in his *Myth, Literature and the African World* argues that no matter what African culture interacts with, the "…umbilical cord between experience and form has never been severed, no matter how tautly stretched." This suggests the ability for African literature to absorb other literary cultures without its roots being totally severed. Hence, the belief that it is possible to return to a pristine period before the arrival of colonialists on the continent is a fallacy.

In much the same way, the propensity by some academics to define African literature in a similar but opposite way to the Euro-centric views would end up being a mirror of the Eurocentric tendencies. Ong (1982) advises against one-sided approaches, insisting that orality and/writing must not be considered as opposing sides, but a complementary pair. His view is that there is nothing wrong with literacy, as literacy and technology are able to do what orality could never do without writing. However, he advises that the tendency of literacy to completely ignore oral traditions or context is detrimental, for those things that are beautiful about oral literature must not be forever lost. Booker (1996, p. 53) ascertains that both multicultural and post-colonial theories arise in a cultural context informed by the attempt to build a new hybrid culture that transcends

the past but still draws on the vestigial echoes of pre-colonial culture, the remnants of the colonial culture, and the continuing legacy of traditions of anti-colonial resistance. Hence, the idea that the novel is a linear progression from oral narratives is one sided and inadequate.

The time has now come to discard the notion of Africa writing back to the coloniser and embrace the idea of Africa writing back to itself (Mwangi, 2009). The novel must be a site in which the indigenous African oral literary aspects interact with literary aspects from other cultures. As Mwangi (2009, p. 109) argues, in practice, "contemporary novelists use orature not so much to differ from the western canon but to deconstruct local oral and literate texts and to invent a new Africa that dialogues with itself and other cultures in the world." This is exactly what the present study wishes to demonstrate by deconstructing the oral narrative mnemonic devices in the Zambian novels under study.

1.4.2 Deconstructed Oral Narrative Mnemonic Devices in the Zambian novel in English
What is needed, with regards to the study of oral narrative mnemonics and the framing of the Zambian novel in English, is an approach that does not take sides but is open minded to the many different forces at work in the contemporary novel. Bhabha (1994) suggests an approach that locates the culture of post-colonial societies that is not based on binary assumptions of centre and periphery. According to the scholar, the past is constantly disrupting the present resulting in the two creating: "…the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation, such art does not merely recall the past as a social cause or aesthetic precedent, it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in between' space that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 7). Therefore, a space outside the 'either-or', which accommodates all the cultural interactions in the novel, is more appropriate for the study of the Zambian novel in English. It is for this reason that my analysis in Chapter Five considers the notion of an unstable in-between space in a back and forth on the move place between signifier and signified. Such a space that in practice does not comply to the rules of the theoretical discourse on linearity is, as Sartre (1964) and Barthes (2001) observe, located beyond and outside fixed signifier/signified relations respectively.

Derrida's (1974) views on the relationship between language and meaning are fundamental to an understanding of the kind of images this study proposes. The scholar argues that there is no clear cut distinction between the signifier and signified or any other binary pairs. As such, "The sign [writing] cannot be taken as a homogenous bridging of an origin (referent) and an end

(meaning)…the sign must be studied under 'erasure' always inhabited by the trace of another sign which never appears as such" (Derrida, 1974, p. XXXXIX). That is why I suggest that the images in the novel are located in an unstable space haunted by past signs and anticipated ones that always appear too late to be perceived. If one pursues the earlier observation on the relationship between natural language, speech and writing, then the signifier (the sign/writing) is a signifier of a signifier (speech) and the signified (speech) is a possible signifier for something else (natural language). In practice, the word tree (signifier) is the written sign of the tree but at the same time it signifies the actual tree (signified). Furthermore, the actual tree (signified) may be a signifier which signifies a tree (indefinite) or the tree (definite) as the signified. Similarly, images in novels such as the actual articulation of the ticklish sensation (signified) in *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) are dispersed into many different meanings or signifiers. These different meanings become chains of signifiers and exist only at signifier level with no original signified in sight. The signifier - signified binary opposition is thus challenged as meaning becomes more polysemous: "The order of the signified is never contemporary, [it] is at best the subtly discrepant inverse or parallel by the time of a breath-from the order of the signifier. And the sign must be the unity of a heterogeneity, since the signified…is not in itself a signifier" (Derrida, 1974, p. 18). Hence, meaning is no longer as simple and straightforward as assumed. Similarly, oral narrative devices used in the novel must not be merely viewed in the light of their predecessors from oral narratives. They must not be merely considered as signifiers of their oral antecedents but in the light of their cultural present which is heterogeneous and multicultural.

Following from the foregoing discussion on the complex relationship between signifier and signified, Chapter Two of this research suggests that oral narrative mnemonic devices in the novel are multicultural because the Zambian society itself is diverse. The whole idea of pre-colonial 'Zambian oral literature' is misleading because Zambian oral literature is not one homogenous entity, but is a product of art forms from the country's different ethnic groups. Contemporary Zambia is a cultural intersection of not only these different ethnic groups and their oral art, but also outside material such as the colonialist inspired novel. This is observed in the interaction among different social groups, ethnic groups, religions and cultures in *Day of the Baboons* (Saidi, 1991) and *Patchwork* (Banda-Aako, 2011). The society has become a "…polyglot, once and for all and irreversibly. The period of national languages coexisting but closed and deaf to each other,

comes to an end" (Bahktin, 1981, p. 3). Therefore, the mnemonic images found in the novels may come from any culture or may be a combination of cultures.

The above views are substantiated by Bakhtin's (1981) idea of the novel as a Carnivalesque where not only cultures, but all levels of society come together without contesting hierarchy. This indicates that the novelist is not only using material from Zambian oral narratives, but merely utilising what is necessary for their message regardless of cultural supremacy and inclination. Such spaces, as the ones mentioned above, "…are also sites of establishing interaction across the rural, urban, literacy and generational divides" (Bahktin, 1981, p. 106).We no longer have high literature or low literature but the novel becomes the site where characters and language from all walks of life interact. The above noted intersection between narratives and characters in given textual worlds leads to the possibility of understanding the modern novel mnemonic devices from the angle of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981) or speech acts from different cultural voices. Thus, I examine how images from *Day of the Baboons* (Saidi, 1991) and *Patchwork* (Banda-Aako, 2011) are constituted after the coming together of the characters' different languages and dialects. Furthermore, Derrida (1974) likens the novel to a bricolage, where the bricoleur collects bits and scraps without any particular plan and then uses those diverse materials as he chooses. The author is at liberty to choose their material, but even when they decide to use material from one culture, it still stands that such a pure culture does not exist in the multicultural environment. From the perspective of different cultures, it might seem that the different cultures would contest the space of the novel but these different worlds may be present at the same time; complementing each other without privileging one over the other (Bakhtin,1981). The dialogic here does not mean conflict. Rather a state in which, when "…faced with a choice of competing interpretations, we must always choose both, as difficult and unsatisfying as that might be to our mono-logical habits of thought" (Booker, 1996, p. 109). Hence, a novelist may combine images born out of the urban area in one character with traditional proverbs in another character, in one conversation.

Furthermore, if writing (sign) is absence then the sign (writing-signifier/ signified) has no meaning in itself. The idea of oral narratives as a logocentric signified of images in the novel is challenged by this idea of a signified located outside the image and the novel as a presence somewhere else. In fact, the sign (writing) signifies speech which also signifies thought but the signifier is always external to the signified (presence) and therefore always a representative of absence.

Consequently, Derrida (1974, p. 297) notes that, "the representative is not the represented but only the representer of the represented; it is not the same as itself. As representer; it is not simply the other of the represented. The evil of the representer or of the supplement of presence is neither the same nor the other." What we have then, is simply a series of absences and an eternal juxtaposition of signifier and signified with no definite signified and hence no definite origin of meaning. This chain is thus, used in the analysis, carried out in Chapter Three, of images repeated in *The Chosen Bud* (Luangala, 1991).

Derrida (1974) therefore proposes that meaning of the sign can only be understood using a term he coins as différance (difference and deference):

> No sign is pure, it always carries the traces of other signs…meaning is never absolutely present, fixed or univocal…it is always postponed, always unstable…speech and writing both participate in this motion of difference and deferral…Both speech and writing rely on interplay of presence and absence rather than their opposition. (Derrida, 1974, p. 67)

Since it stands for absence, the meaning of a sign is always deferred or gotten from other words, as in the case where meaning of one word depends on the other word. The presence of the sign is always marked by its absence but this absence always carries a trace of the preceding presence. The trace, according to Derrida (1974, p. xvii) ..."is the absence of presence, an always absent present of the lack at the origin". It does not really exist because it also comes from elsewhere, a signifier of something else. One observes how translated songs in *The Chosen Bud* (Luangala, 1991) in Chapter Three have the original meaning absent in the present of the novel because the original indigenous song is not there. Yet, by virtue of being a version of the indigenous song they carry traces of it but also traces of the new context in the novel where they get their meaning. In other words, the written word tree (absence), for instance, only has meaning in relation to its spoken counterpart (presence), hence it only carries a trace of the actual meaning of the 'tree' and yet its referee (the spoken tree) is also only a trace of the concept of 'tree' from natural language. Such images that represent absence because of the absence of the signified except as traces cannot refer to any absolute signified including indigenous oral narrative signified.

The idea of différance can be illustrated further by the idea of supplements, whereby meaning, which is different and deferred from the signifier, can be provided by these supplements or the

context. For instance, the movement from natural language to speech or from speech to writing must not be viewed from the perspective of binary opposition but as a supplementary act. Derrida (1974) builds on Rousseau's suggestion that speech develops as a supplement of something lacking in natural language just as writing develops as an effort to fill up something lacking in speech. It follows that if writing has a lack, a supplement will develop to fill up the lack. This is what one observes in the case of evolving round characters in *Changing Shadows* (Musenge, 2014) in Chapter three where Mwila's character in the novel is at different times not seen as difference but as supplements that are added to her character as she evolves. This means that rather than absolute signification to a complete signified outside of the image and the novel, her identification comes from a combination of traces and supplements. Language and by extension images in the Zambian novel must be considered as chains of supplements and traces. That is: "an infinite chain, ineluctably multiplying the supplementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing they defer: the mirage of the thing itself, of immediate presence, of originary perception" (Derrida, 1974, p. 157). So writing exists as a supplement of speech, not an opposition because writing is able to do what speech cannot do. The idea of supplements can be taken further with the following illustration: The word tree signifies the actual tree (signified) so the actual tree is simply a supplement of the word tree. Language then becomes a string or a chain of supplements depicting différance. Language is made up of chains of traces and supplements without a decipherable point of origin. This influences my argument that images in the novel must be considered as divided essences with beginnings and no origins because origins pre-inscribe an absolute signified. This is because many other idioms are produced by articulation of the sign in the novel. Hence, my disavowal of fixation on fixed entities, such as 'identity', which Brubaker and Cooper (2000) suggest is incapable of encompassing all the other others and supplements that may arise from a sign's articulation. Finally, other than view images in the novel as exact replicas from oral narratives, this study proposes that the images may only comprise of traces and supplements from their predecessors. This suggests images which are forever changing.

This also means that images in the novel cannot be exact replications of oral narratives because they are specified according to particular time and space. Bakhtin's (1981, p. 26) idea of Chronotopes accounts for "…the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature". Chronotopes are images which are context specific and

relate to specific historical moments or periods. The novel becomes a literal crossroad, in reference to the opening epigraph of this chapter, in which different cultural images (and attendant time and space relations) meet but do not always stay. As a result, I consider, in Chapter Four, the ways chronotopes from different epochs and genres interact and the significance of this tripartite inter- and intra- chronotopic level relations in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010). Further examined are the variations of different chronotopic interactions in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) and their effect on the constituted images

The concept of the agential spiral (Vanderhaagen, 2013) also fosters the idea of dynamic and fluid mnemonic images in the novel. An agential spiral, in the same way with the movement of chronotopes illustrates processes by which the novel acts as an agent which shapes, reshapes and transmits images from one period/novel to another yet leaving trace. Vanderhaagen (2013, p. 183) postulates with the image of a spiral which:

> …highlights the cyclical yet potentially innovative process in which different agents (or groups of agents) at different points in time rhetorically reconstruct the past so that it can be productively appropriated by other agents. Unlike a circle, a spiral does not travel in precisely the same path but follows it in parallel motion, as one coil in a spring follows another.

The fact that similar but not exact images can be found in different novels at different epochs suggests the presence of spiral agency or the way different chronotopes continue to interact in new ways and form new relationships with other cultures all the time. A novelist is at liberty to transform already existing images or come up with new ones all together. Mwangi (2009, p. 111) ascertains that "Communication is dynamic and different in a different time and context". Thus, it becomes impossible to imagine a present day Zambian novel that uses material solely from the Zambian oral narrative in the underlying circumstances.

Notwithstanding, I recognise that in some cases oral narrative images play a role in framing the Zambian novel in English and yet it is never the only cultural or generic influence on the novel. My view here concerning the complexity of fixing images in the novel to an oral narrative signified can be explained better with Wertch's (2008) idea of Schematic narratives and Musila's (2008) idea on the role of rumours in the murder of Julie Ward. The idea of schematic narratives is based on the supposition that it is possible to trace a common scheme when people compose narratives

out of the same cultural material, no matter the spatial or temporal distance between them. Wertsch's (2008, p. 122) study of First World War narratives from Russians of different age groups reveals that of the different narratives "…a recognisable perspective continues to exist thanks to the functioning of a schematic narrative template." Bahktin (1981, p. 26) affirms that although chronotopes have temporal and spatial specificity, "One can easily construct a typical composite schema…taking into account the most important deviations and variations" among different epochs. The idea of dynamic and fluid mnemonic images in the novel can further be likened to the manner in which rumours are instigated. Parallels can be drawn between the agential spiral and the characteristics of rumour. Musila (2008, p. 28) postulates that the latter texts are able "…to archive a whole range of interpretations of experiences" due to their fluidity, high valence and mobility. Musila (2008, p. 31) further explains how a compilation of rumours acts as a source into the murder of Julie Ward because "…one can map out specific motifs in the various rumours regarding Julie Ward's murder." Human beings act as agents through which a narrative is mapped using rumour. In the same way, novels may be the agents by which images are used to construct and transmit ever-changing mnemonic images. Similarly, the differences and variations that may be found among different images in the same novel, such as the variations in the articulation of the conflict motif in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007), is a point of reference here. This deconstructs the idea of the presence in novels of oral narrative mnemonic images which are frozen in time.

In conclusion, this study is inspired by the gap in research on the relationship between indigenous oral narratives and the contemporary Zambian novel in English. Most of these studies such as Chilala (2016) or Mbwayu (1987) suggest that the novel simply replicates indigenous language and oral narrative mnemonic methods respectively as a way of evoking indigenous Zambian culture. This study deconstructs this idea by arguing that although the novel may adopt oral narrative mnemonics, the adoption is not a slavish one. Rather, the contemporary novel creates its own images born out of the multicultural and diverse environment in which it is born. The study wishes to fill this information gap and elucidate the observation in the study of Zambian novels in English by demonstrating the relationship between oral narrative mnemonic methods and the multicultural and diverse society of the novel. In so doing, the study presents an objective approach to both Zambian and African novels in English.

Most studies in post-colonial countries, such as Zambia that deal with oral narrative mnemonic devices in the novel have ignored the mnemonic images resulting from the multicultural diverse and dynamic society of the novel. Studies such as Chirwa (1985), Mbwayu (1987), Sackey (2010) and Chilala (2016) can be cited here. While Sackey (2010) recognises the oral mnemonic method used by Ayi Kei Armah in his novels, he does so with a one-sided significance of these to the revival of indigenous oral narrative culture. Reference can be made to the collective or communal narrator present in the novels. Likewise, Mbwayu (1987) and Chilala (2016) only highlight those mnemonic images which resound with indigenous Zambian languages while being oblivious to the more culturally diverse society of the novel. The preoccupation with the influence from indigenous oral narratives and culture may be a result of choice of research focus but it exposes a gap in research concerning the contemporary African novel in English and oral narrative mnemonics.

Mwangi (2009) suggests the need for Africa to write back to itself in order to subvert the idea that oral narratives generally fit perfectly into the contemporary African novel. However, his focus is on how modern novelists subvert this idea by, for instance, recreating oral narrative epics which subvert the patriarchal nature of their descendants from oral literature. Although his general focus is not to deconstruct the 'linear progression from oral narrative' theory, Chirwa (1985) exposes us to the diverse and multi-ethnic language of the urban areas in 'Zambian short stories' and calls the hybrid language or terms 'Zambianisms'. This forms part of Chirwa's conclusion on the narrative style of Zambian Short stories in English. 'Zambianisms' together with Mwangi's observation on the contemporary African novelist draws us to the conclusion that there must be something different that the novel is bringing to the Zambian and African novel in English.

The previous views suggest that the notion of a novel or more specifically pure indigenous oral narrative mnemonic images passed on from oral literature to contemporary times is unfathomable. That is, if one considers the fact that the idea of the 'African' or 'Zambian novel' is often brought to bear down on the illusionary presence of purely indigenous oral mnemonic images in the contemporary novel. It is for this reason that the present study, with the aid of Derridan (1974) deconstruction and other related theories, forwards the possibility that the multi-cultural and dynamic world of the novel has an influence on the type of images produced even when the techniques used are from oral literature.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

1.5.1 Research Design
The study uses the Critical Textual Approach to study the selected novels. This is a text based approach that focuses on the text as a "distinctive discursive moment between encoding and decoding that justifies special scholarly engagement" (Fursich, 2009, p. 238). Furthermore, the approach falls under literary cultural studies which consider qualitative methods for analysis. Specifically, the novels under analysis are considered as case studies or samples from the wider corpus of Zambian novels in English that will be analysed using a literary and cultural studies-based philosophical design. The philosophical method "uses the tools of argumentation derived from the philosophical traditions, concepts, models and theories to critically explore and challenge" (University of Southern California, 2018) existing discourses.

In other words, this study uses Derrida's (1974) idea of deconstruction as a theory which challenges the idea of linear progression and replication of indigenous oral narrative mnemonic devices from oral narratives to the novel. By its very nature, deconstruction is a "radical questioning of underlying assumptions of a text by exposing internal inconsistencies" (Fursich, 2009, p. 240). Therefore, the Critical textual approach and the case studies allow the researcher to focus on an in depth analysis and exploration of the selected novels.

1.5.2 Scope of Study
The study deconstructs the idea of purely indigenous oral mnemonic images by discussing multicultural, varied, mobile and alterable images in selected Zambian novels in English. Specifically, the study is concerned with the way images are articulated in the following selected novels in English; Saidi's (1991) *Day of the Baboons*, Banda-Aako's (2011) *Patchwork*, Musenges (2014) *Changing Shadows*, Luangala's (1991) *The Chosen Bud*, Mulaisho's (2007) *Tongue of The Dumb*, Sinyangwe's (2010) *Quills of Desire*, Namutowe's *Echoes of Betrayal* (2019), Phiri's (1994) *Ticklish Sensation*, Kalimamukwento's (2019) *The Mourning Bird* and Serpel's (2019) *The Old Drift*. The novels were selected using purposive sampling as this was the most reliable in making sure that selection was well spread out in relation to the novels in English published during the Zambian post-colonial period (1964 to date).

1.6 Chapter Outline

The study which considers oral narrative mnemonic devices and the framing of the Zambian novel in English as depicted in selected novels consists of a number of chapters as outlined below.

Chapter One introduces the study. It outlines the background of the study, and presents a review of literature on oral mnemonic devices and the novel from all over the globe. It also discusses theoretical considerations and their implications on the study while presenting the problem under discussion.

Chapter Two deconstructs the signifier/signified relationship between oral narrative mnemonic images in Ellen Banda-Aako's (2011) *Patchwork* and William Saidi's (1991) *Day of the Baboons*, on one hand, and indigenous oral narrative mnemonic images or methods, on the other hand. The chapter uses the Derridan (1974) deconstruction of the signifier/signified binary to highlight the heteroglossic and carnivalesque or multicultural, diverse and dynamic mnemonic images in the novel that disrupt the signifier (oral narrative mnemonic images in the novels) and signified (indigenous oral narrative mnemonic images) relationship between the novel and oral narratives. It thus opens up analysis of images in the novel to numerous possibilities.

Chapter Three explores how the idea of differànce challenges the insistence on a logocentric origin situated on oral narratives from which images in the novel originate and refer to. This is based on the view that images in novels such as *Changing Shadows* (Musenge, 2014) and *The Chosen Bud* (Luangala, 1991) are always empty of meaning because they refer to a signified that is always located outside the image and the novel as an oral narrative signified. The chapter also explores the effect of changing context on indigenous songs that are translated or placed verbatim in the novel in order to detrmine whether images articulated in this way can be absolute signifiers of any absolute signified that is incapable of articulation in the novel.

Chapter Four deconstructs the idea of exact replications and referrents (absolute signifier) of oral narratives (absolute signified) because the sign or chronotope in Bahktinian (Bahktin, 1984) terms is inherently made up of unstable time and space relations. I examine signs in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) to establish whether chronotopes (that is images from different epochs and genres) that form polysystems or combination of images with varying time and space relations can be equated to an absolute fixed oral narrative signified. The chapter also focuses on the idea of

pure duration to examine the complications associated with the already unstable inherent time and space relations of the sign. Furthermore, the idea of a tripartite internal chronotopic structure that has various inter and intra level interaction is used to argue that such an unstable chronotope or image in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) cannot be equivalent to any homogenous entity such as oral narratives. Thus, the chapter examines the ways in which images in such novels end up being unstable with varying chronotopic relations with each other and prevent them from being absolute signfiers of anything fixed such as oral narratives thus breaking the assumed fixed signifier/signified binary between the two.

Chapter Five breaks signifier and signified binaries by suggesting that fixation on oral narrative images or any other signified results in images being articulated in an unstable in-between space located in-between signifier and signified but beyond signifier signified dichotomy. The chapter focuses on the way the desire to articulate the perfect marriage in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) becomes an eternal back and forth oscillation between perfection when things are working out in the marriages such as Melvin and Susan and imperfection when they are not. The chapter links the the trope of marriage with the in-between space inspired by Bhabha's (1994; 2004) third space of cultural ennuncition as an ambivalence and unhomly place always haunted or carrying traces of past affairs and relationships and unhomely. This is in order to discredit the idea that the novel comprises of definitied and fixed images that can refer to anything concrete such as an oral narrative signified. The chapter also focuses on how the difference between the theoretical and practical articulation of the signified ticklish sensation in *Ticklsih Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) ends up scattering the signified into different signifiers when Jojo's experiences with different girls proves different from the expected signified. As a result, the chapter argues that the sign or image in the novel must then be viewed as fleeting images that do not stay in the same place long enough to be grounded but are constantly being affected and affecting other images and constantly under revision without closure, located in the in-between but beyond space. Only then can images in the novel be freed from the signifier/signified dichotomy involving an oral narrative signified.

Chapter Six challenges logocentric discourse in which images in the novel are a linear continuation from oral narrative signified and transcendental origin. It uses observations on the relationship between street kids and Non Governmental Organisations in *The Mourning Bird* to tease out fixations on identity based on obtaining identity by fixing it on a preferred other and liken

this to the way the discourse on orality determines identity of images in the novel by relating them to a transcendent oral narrative signified. The chapter argues that this creates binaries of centre and margin and that there is need to engage the margins to hear those silenced voices, those gaps that are exposed when focus is on the dominant discourse such as oral narrative discourse. This is because such pre-inscribed entities such as names in *The Mourning Bird* often like Brubaker and Cooper suggest tend to fail when they cannot account for other characteristics that an object has. As a result, Brubaker and Cooper's idea is used to replace the term identity with other idioms to suggest that there is need to engage other others (other than the preferred Other such as oral narratives) such as the mixture of different genres in *The Old Drift*, some which do not remain the same over time. The chapter presents further that, these other others in the novel must be looked at as having divided essence with beginning and nor origin as we observe in the choir in *The Old Drift*. The suggestion given is that one can avoid designating a logocentric position to any signified such as oral narratives and open up to different things that authors are doing in the novel other than simply replicating oral narrative images or writing back to the west. Ultimately, the chapter argues that fixation with an identity and any prescribed entity such as fixation of images in the novel on oral narratives ends up being an empty set because it becomes a desire of another desire (the discourse on orality's desire) and cannot fully articulate itself to an absolute oral narrative signified or identity.

Endnotes

[1] Inter and intra cosmopolitan, the society is a mixture of material from the different ethnic groups and also from outside Zambia; Primorac (2014).

[2] The Australian Government provides this information on their online page that profiles the various ethnic groups in Australia (Australian Government, n.d.).

[3] Simwinga (2006, p. 2) in his analysis of the use of Zambian minority languages, places the number of tribes in Zambia at 73.

[4] She is a Jamaican poet and fiction writer. She is behind novels such as *Dancing Lessons* (2011) and the collection of short stories entitled, *Summer Lightening and Other Stories* (1986) which won her a Common Wealth Writers award.

[5] Zambian ethnic groups from the Northern (Bemba and Tabwa) and Copper Belt Province (Lamba) of Zambia.

[6] Finnegan (2012) in her book titled *Oral Literature in Africa* discusses actualisation and transmission as the most important differences between oral and written texts.

[7] This is a way of asserting group autonomy by forcing readers to interact with the indigenous language (Ashcroft, et al., 2004, p. 64).

[8] Before 2010, Ngugi's novels are only translated into English by others but his latest novels are self-translated into English. When asked in an interview if this move is not against his 'decolonisation through language' stance, he maintains his stance that translation is only meant for the western audience who cannot read Kikuyu (Williams, 2013).

Chapter Two: Deconstructing the Linear Ancestry from Indigenous Oral Narratives to the Zambian Novel

2.1 Introduction

The task of this chapter and the subsequent ones is to deconstruct the idea that the Zambian novel in English is a linear continuation or a signifier of indigenous Zambian oral narratives. Of interest to this study is whether, the images in the novel are purely a mirror of oral narrative images. There is need to deconstruct the taken-for-granted continuities of oral forms (Chinweizu, et al., 1985) in the novel because such a deconstructive approach guarantees an objective and eclectic approach that is directed at legitimising and opening up the novel to diverse and often ignored interpretation. As discussed in Chapter One, the presence of oral narrative mnemonic devices and use of the mnemonic technique in the Zambian novel has often been construed as evidence of a monologic oral narrative ancestry. This chapter deconstructs the notion of linear ancestry from oral narratives to the novel by focusing on multicultural, heteroglossic and carnivalesque elements of Ellen Banda Aako's *Patchwork* (2011) and William Saidi's *Day of the Baboons* (1991). The chapter refers to multiculturalism as the way in which the Zambian novel brings together different local and foreign ethnicities in one space and echoe the equally multi-ethnic contemporary Zambian society. In addition, Bahktinian (1981) heteroglossia is used to address the resultant diversity of cultural voices, thereby suggesting that there is not only one culture but multiple cultural perspectives speaking in the Zambian novel in English. This chapter further uses carnivalesque images or images that use humour and chaos to demonstrate how multiculturalism and heteroglossia subvert and liberate the Zambian novel from the dominant discourse of linear ancestry from indigenous oral narratives. In this way, the study considers whether mnemonic images born in such an environment are pure antecedents of indigenous Zambian oral narrative mnemonic devices.

The research draws from Derrida's (1974) objection to binary opposition, that is Aristotle's non-contradiction, Heidegger's absence versus presence and Saussure's signifier/signified in favour of the notion of mutual inclusiveness of language and meaning. Put succinctly, the study is influenced by a rejection of the idea that speech and writing are binary opposites in which speech precedes writing and writing signifies or stands for speech. This includes the idea that writing (sign), comprises of the mutually exclusive signifier and signified whereby the signifier refers to an

always absent absolute signified. It is the impetus towards binary pairs and opposites, such as speech versus writing and signifier versus signified, which this study equates to orality versus writing or text versus meaning, respectively. Thus, this study challenges binary oppositions, especially those in which the presence of one term means the absence of the other.

As the presence/ absence dichotomy demonstrates, one tends to assume that the oral narrative tradition and the novel (literacy) can only exist in the absence of the other (Derrida, 1974). Presented with two choices, most African critics (Ashcroft, 2004; Onwumere & Egblonu, 2014) and writers favour oral narrative influence as more representative of Africa since it existed before the coming of literacy. This kind of thinking is characteristic of Hellenistic and classical thought, which privileges logic and order (Atkins, 1983). On the contrary, deconstructionist thought suggests that in reality, "order and control elude him [the scholar], the straight line he seeks always curves, and the difference, indeed purity, he hopes for between order and chaos, reason and madness is beyond his grasp: differences stubbornly refuse to be clear, sharp and total" (Atkins, 1983, p.35). Therefore, scholarship must not ignore the fact that linear progression from indigenous oral narratives to the novel is breached by the 'curves' and 'chaos' and other disruptions. These illustrate that the relationship is not simply one in which the absence of oral narratives means or gives way to the presence of the novel. It is for this reason that this study maintains that the multicultural, heteroglossic and carnivalesque environment of the novel provides the novel with an identity that transcends the absence/presence binary and hence the sole influence from the Zambian oral narrative tradition.[1]

Specifically, this chapter interprets and uses the signifier/ signified dichotomy in two ways. Firstly, it considers the signifier/ signified dichotomy to argue that the novel (writing) is not a pure signifier or a sign of oral narratives (orality). Secondly, the chapter contends that the expected representational relationship between text/sign (signifier) and meaning (signified) typical of the novel is not straightforward. This view draws from the consideration that in both cases the sign has always implied the existence of an intelligible "meaning" to which the sign itself refers. What is signified thus becomes a center "which precedes or follows the sign as a ground" (Atkins, 1983, pp.39-40). In the same way, it has often been assumed that indigenous oral narratives precede the written novel and therefore every novel refers back to indigenous oral narratives as a centre of meaning or an absolute signified. However, multicultural mnemonic images in the Zambian novel

in English disrupt the idea of a distinct centre of meaning while breaking the signifier/signified binary.

It can be stated that although the novel borrows mnemonic techniques from indigenous oral narratives, the different cultures present in the novel affect the kind of images produced. Oral narrative mnemonic methods, such as improvisation from oral narrative tradition, are used in the Zambian novel in English, but this time the environment and also the images are multicultural in nature. An exploration of William Saidi's *Day of the Baboons* (1991) and Ellen Banda-Aako's *Patchwork* (2011), later in this chapter, shows that both novels certainly use oral narrative mnemonic techniques related to the classical memory of images (Yates, 1966), symbolising, cuing and improvisation (Vansina, 1985).[2] However, a linear continuation or replication of such images is obliterated by the fact that the mnemonic images in the novels are influenced by the diverse cultures present in the novel. As such, the images are multi-faceted and only reflect classical and indigenous Zambian mnemonic techniques as part of the many other cultural forces at work in the novel.

It must be noted that multicultural images in the Zambian novel in English are facilitated by the fact that the novel, in its written form, has a larger spatial coverage and has no contact with the reader at production nor does it have any necessary obligation to the audience or reader.[3] It means that we are no longer dealing with mnemonic images representative of a homogenous environment but the more diverse and complex cultural environment, in terms of linear transition from indigenous oral narratives to the novel. The approach I adopt in this chapter is aligned to the deconstructive critic's search for the "moment when any text will differ from itself, transgressing its own system of values, becoming undecidable in terms of its own system of meaning" (Atkins, 1983, p.25). That 'moment' is therefore located in the space where the intermixing of Zambian culture together with the difference in style of the novel (as opposed to oral narratives) constantly challenges the desire for the straight line from indigenous oral narrative tradition to the novel. That disruptive multicultural moment and the equally disruptive mnemonic images produced is what the present study wishes to examine in the selected texts.

The multicultural mnemonic images proposed in this chapter are defined in relation to Bahktin's (1981; 1984) ideas of the novel as heteroglossia and a carnivalesque. As outlined, in the previous chapter, heteroglossia may be broken down as Hetero- (many) and -glossia (voice) with the voice

possibly interpreted as "…a certain stylistic color, a certain tone of emotion and intention that can be described as glossality" (Tjupa, 2009, p.124). All this is the outcome of different languages, ethnicities and cultures which come together in the novel. Nevertheless, the novel is not only the coming together of these different cultures and ethnicity as diversity also affects the way mnemonic images in the novel are framed. Hence, the fact that this is different from the homogenous environment of indigenous oral narrative and mnemonic images nullifies the idea of an unbroken transition from oral narratives to the novel.

That said, this chapter is concerned with the manner in which different speech genres come together to create one text, which is the novel in this case. Although the novel and oral narrative as speech genres consist of individual utterances, the novel's heterogeneity stems from a more complicated, highly developed and organised cultural communication. Bahktin (1986) differentiates between primary (simple) and secondary (complex) speech genres to accommodate oral based speech types (typical of oral narratives) and novel's speech types respectively. Bahktin (1986, p.62) substantiates the distinction in his view that during their formation, complex speech types

> absorb and digest various primary (simple) genres that have taken form in unmediated speech communion. These primary genres are altered and assume a special character when they enter into complex ones. They lose their immediate relation to actual reality and to the real utterances of others.

This means that different cultural voices and utterances from various indigenous Zambian oral narratives, ethnic groups and other non-Zambian cultures come together in the novel to create a culture that is unrecognisable as a single culture. Akin to this is Butler-Evans (1995, p. 128) observation over Ellison's images of America in *Invisible Man* "…as deriving its vitality from…various voices that represent different ethnic class and political locations." It can be observed, even from the speech acts of a sole character in the novel that, they are influenced and portrayed as socially and culturally diverse individuals (Tjupa, 2009). Yet, the resulting voice or glossality may be a culturally diverse whole. Hence, what Bahktin (1986) cites as distinctive features between primary and secondary and simple and complex speech genres is very close to what defines the disjuncture and continuities from the oral form to the modern novelistic forms.

The fact that the novel is written adds to the multiple voices in the novel. As Ong (2002) asserts, writing is able to do what orality could not do or could do differently. The novel can afford to alternate between internal and external focalisation[4] which does not always limit focalisation and perspective to one narrator or the author. Different levels of narration may affect the voice speaking in the novel. Whether the novel has an embedded narrative or not, as is the case with *Day of the Baboons* (1991), affects the kind of mnemonic images created. Questions of what comprises a particular image, who is actually speaking, focalisation, double voice, polyphony and point of view become very important issues when considering mnemonic devices in the novel. Furthermore, the reality that the novel can accommodate different voices and points of view at the same time breaks the idea of oral narratives and the novel as binary opposites but pointing to a relationship of mutual inclusiveness. This is especially because the multiple voices are usually a result of different cultural perspectives.

In this chapter, the aspect of heteroglossia is used together with Bahktin's (1981) idea of the carnivalesque. The carnivalesque is a space where different kinds of people come together in laughter, spectacle and festivity. The Bahktinian carnival has roots in the:

> …pre-historic stage of folkloric unity of people and later its oral traditions enriches the serio-comic low genres of Socratic dialogues and Manippean satires that originated in classical Antiquity… the spectacular and collective nature of this festivity dominantly emerged in the early medieval period and later middle ages where it, through its public pageants, masks and parodic stylization lured everyone into its fold irrespective of class and ideological distances. (Singh, 2017, p.39)

This space and time specific folkloric event resonates with what can be considered the Zambian carnivalesque form – the way different social classes and ideologies come together in the novel without consideration of the inherent differences among them. As with the Bahktinian carnival, this disrupts existing social and cultural hierarchy or the status quo but also speaks to the ability of the novel to break its link with indigenous oral narratives by bringing together different elements, events, and cultures in the texts under study.

Masks and other techniques, such as grotesque imagery, are important tools for juxtaposing and overturning authority at the carnival in the form of carnival subversion. In Bahktinian studies the term carnival subversion "…implies people's rejection of existing norms of hierarchy and cultural predominance" (Singh, 2017, p.45). Most of the humour and laughter at a carnival is the result of

the masks, parody and comic subversion of existing leadership or authority as observed in the spectacle from the federal government in *Day of the Baboons* (1991). The federal government think they are in control of the blacks when they are actually deceived by the mask-wearing protagonists. In *Patchwork* (2011), carnival subversion is associated with grotesque images that may be related to the desire to subvert hierarchy. Grotesque imagery is a sign of protest by the oppressed but at the same time it is a sign of the world turned inside out for what it really is and for all to see. In the first instance it is "…best expressed as acting out or behaving in an unconventional manner" (Threlkeld-Dent, 2017, p.7) such as grotesque displays. It could also mean grotesque images related to the lower stratum of the body which Bahktin (1981; 1984) proposes relates to the lower and mostly ignored classes. Thus, carnival subversion advances the deconstructive agenda of this chapter by forcing the multicultural grotesque and deceptive images to the surface.

The public places in the novels under analysis provide good opportunities to consider the notion of the carnival. This is especially plausible because Bahktinian studies, "expand the theory of the carnival beyond a single folk event and identify carnivalesque as a semiotic cultural code, signifying more than just texts which focus on the specific popular tradition in medieval England" (Bahktin, 1984, p.16). Hence, public places and the characters in both novels link with and belong to diverse nationalities, race, social class and religion. As Singh (2017, p.43) observes: "the carnival spirit prevails when they demolish all such definitional categories that divide people, culture, language and geographies." This is unlike the oral narrative whose artist is restricted to creating images which suit the equally limited spatial and cultural coverage of indigenous oral narratives. This is also different from the novel, which has a wider and more diverse cultural coverage within the texts and in relation to its readers. The various cultural, social, religious, and other forces at work in both novels under study can indeed be compared to a carnival in which different people come together regardless of affiliation to one cultural group or another. The analysis seeks to discuss the inter-cultural dialogue such as contestation of power that take place when different people meet and cultures meet in the novel. Suffice to say that, with its tendency to bring together different ethnicities and cultures in one geographical place, the novel refutes the view that it is a linear continuation from oral narratives.

2.2 *Day of the Baboons*

2.2.1 Disrupting Linear Progression using Deceptive Masks

This section discusses how the deceptive mask motif in *Day of the Bboons* (1991) disrupts linear progression from indigenous oral narrative mnemonic images to the novel. Masks worn at a literal carnival were disguises, facilitating actors' stepping out of their personalities to take up new personas. People from the lower realms of society would wear masks in order to make fun of and subvert the status quo temporarily. In the Zambian case, figurative masks of subservience were worn during the colonial period to feign loyalty and divert the attention of colonial authority from local subversive activities. One of the major themes in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) borders on deceptive masks as a strategy for black members of the party to organise themselves under the radar of the federal government. The novel, which focuses on the struggle for black liberation in Zambia during the federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, shows the use of deceptive masks as the only way that enables the black party members to operate in the tightly censored federal system. The figurative masks of christian, teacher and barber man worn by Shadrach, Misheck and Abednego respectively, allow them to work for the party while remaining undetected by the government. The masks allow them further to take the reins of power from the federal government while remaining inconspicuous. Allegorically, the subversion of power by the masks parallels a disruption of the dominant discourse of linear progression from indigenous oral narratives to the novel.

Specifically, the deceptive masks unseat and disrupt the dominant discourse of linear continuity from the oral narrative to the novel by ironically unmasking the multicultural mnemonic images of the novel. For Shadrach, Misheck and Abednego wearing masks means taking up different persona and cultural standpoints at different times. For instance, Misheck fits perfectly in his role as custodian and disseminator of western culture at the federal school but at the same time belongs and shares cultural traditions with the predominantly black Sabuchi Township where he lives (Saidi, 1991). In ways such as these, the protagonists use masks to double and sometimes multiply ethnic, social, religious and political beliefs. In so doing, they demonstrate that the novel's mnemonic images, unlike their oral narrative counterparts, are made up of different cultural voices, which resonates with the notion of heteroglossia (Bahktin, 1981). Furthermore, in a manner similar

to Bahktin's (1981) carnivalesque, the masks unseat the dominant discourse of mnemonic images as solely representative of oral narratives by ironically revealing their multicultural personality.

The unbroken line from oral narrative mnemonics and the novel is interrupted by the fact that the personality of characters in the novel depends on the different cultures they interact with. Generally, oral narrative mnemonic characters or images in oral narratives are presented as related to static and mono-cultural cues.[5] For instance, these cues are, among the Igbo of Nigeria, usually "in the form of epithets (mostly praise names) that identify heroes in terms of their distinct physical or psychological attributes; associations with ancestors, other heroes, communities or other groups in the heroic world and the circumstances of their emergence" (Azuonye, 1999, p.28). Such familiar cues are highly effective memory aids for both oral performers and their audiences. It is for this reason that in Zambian indigenous oral narratives names of characters such as *fipindile* or the one who turns things around have similar mnemonic resonance (Cancel, 2013). However, for the novel, which does not rely so much on memory, characters are created to suit the textual environment that is marked by culturally intermixed and dynamic images. The fact that indigenous black Zambian men in *Day of the Baboons* maintain a hold on their cultural roots and personality, while taking up the Biblical names Shadrach, Misheck and Abednego, symbolises a mixture of culture – indigenous and Christian culture. This is indicative of the multicultural context of the novel.

In fact, the indigenous image is broken down into fragments and another is born in its place from the moment that indigenous Zambian culture interacts with other cultures in the novel. As mentioned in the previous chapter, rather than undergoing a straight path of cyclical replication, images in the novel are reshaped and influenced by diverse cultures in the novel that creates a spiral or coiled path (Vanderhaagen, 2013). Shadrach (Mwansa), one of the main characters in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) is an illustration of this transition from indigenous identity to multiculturalism from the moment he moves from the village to the city. One of the requirements of his new job as a garden boy for missionaries in the city of Mufulira is that he becomes a Christian. His new multi-voiced identity is marked by his baptism which together with his new name Shadrach symbolises rebirth (Guerin, 2005, p.185). The implication of the transition is clear in Mwansa's reaction to his baptism which he felt "had introduced a newness in his person; a new respect" (Saidi, 1991, p.54). This is central to the notion of spiral reshaping, disruption of an

indigenous image and the transmutation into plurality and the new-multicultural image. Hence, the image in the novel must not be considered as simply a replication, mirror or pure signifier of the indigenous oral narrative image, but a much more complex multi-cultural creation.

In addition, the multicultural images born in the novel reflect the double and multi-voicedness characteristic of Heteroglossia. One of the highlights of Bakhtin's (1981) *Dialogic Imagination* is the ability of the novel to bring together different cultural voices with distinct perspectives and importance. After his baptism, Mwansa is an embodiment of two different cultural voices. This is noted in Ambrose's articulations to Shadrach after his baptism: "We shall continue to call you Mwansa. Your Christian name is good for signing papers and other things like that. But you are still Mwansa" (Saidi, 1991, p.54). On the one hand, this proves that although he has been baptised into Christianity and given a new name, he still bears the mark of his indigenous tradition. Conversely, it confirms that Shadrach or the image is no longer a mere representation of oral narrative ancestry but a double-voiced cultural image incapable of being identified with a transcendent cultural influence. This also reveals that the signified (indigenous orality) and signifier (the novel) can exist together without assuming that one is only present when the other is absent.

Importantly, bias to particular cultural voices in the novel has the detrimental effect of illuminating some aspects of an image while ignoring or concealing others. One must bear in mind that a multi-cultural novel, such as the one this research suggests, is not a representative of a single ideology or belief. Rather, it is a multi-layered construction comprising diverse beliefs and cultures. One needs, in order to unravel the different layers, to go beyond the carnivalesque-like masks or images which characteristically "…hide something, keeps a secret, deceives" (Bahktin, 1984, p.40). This is what one witnesses in Shadrach who wears the mask of a Christian as expected by his employers but underneath it reveals the workings of a diverse belief system. Despite being a Christian, Shadrach or Mwansa remains connected to the bottle of roots his mother gave him and we notice him rubbing it and praying at the same time whenever he is in trouble. In other words: "He believed the bottle still helped him. He also believed in the power of prayer, though he retained a primitive scepticism about it" (Saidi, 1988, p.58). He conspicuously manages to hide his double beliefs as noted in his musing that: "Mr Grant would not believe that he divided his faith between God and the small bottle of roots and oil. What did he himself believe?" (Saidi, 1988, p.44). This reflects

his deception and in a way indicates that he wears a figurative mask in much the same way as the participants of the carnivalesque wear real masks. The secret of the mask is a confirmation that the novel, unlike the oral narrative, is made up of layers of cultural perceptions and practices that constitute the multicultural images of the novel.

In addition, distinct meaning and cultural identity are destabilised by multiple and diverse personalities in the novel. This may be related to Derrida's view that meaning in any cultural text that uses language is never absolute. Instead, the signifier (writing or the novel) and signified (indigenous oral narratives) that comprise the sign (or image) in the novel are never mutually exclusive but exist because they always bear traces of each other (Derrida, 1974). The instability in meaning is illustrated by Shadrach's schizophrenic personality, which is characterised by delusions and a confusion over what reality is when he encounters the multicultural environment of the city. On the one hand, he signifies the man from the village whose gruesome murder of an old woman is justifiable as vengeance for the deaths of his family members back in the village. He remains adamant and unrepentant even after he learns the Ten Commandments and specifically that God forbids murder (Saidi, 1988, p.41). On the other hand, the paranoia we witness whenever Shadrach meets a policeman or anyone in authority, after moving to the city, signifies a man who is not too confident of his innocence. The unclear boundaries between Shadrach as a signifier and the personality he manifests as a signified is further illustrated in the way he keeps rubbing his bottle of roots, towards the end of the novel when his death becomes eminent and yet he dies reciting Psalms 23 not long after testifying in court that he did not believe in Christianity. Shadrach's instability and uncertainty disrupts the idea of distinct cultural images that are frozen in time and form. It further challenges the view that orality and writing are binary opposites in which the presence of one means the absence of the other.

We observe another dimension of multiculturalism in the novel when deceptive masks disrupt existing cultural hegemonies by deliberately adopting other cultures while remaining loyal to one's own. In this way, any kind of authority could be unsuspectingly satirised and challenged in a way which is characteristic of a literal carnival (Bahktin, 1984). During the colonial period, western education was a major tool used by the colonial government to seal their dominion in British colonies such as Zambia. As such, the content of the education system was tailored in such a way as to indoctrinate Africans and make them subservient. The civil service was meant to create

puppets of the indigenous population and make the indoctrination process easily acceptable to other indigenous members of that society. Ironically, one way of disrupting the British colonial domination project was to infiltrate the system by joining the civil service while inconspicuously remaining loyal to indigenous traditions. One of the protagonists in *Day of the Baboons* (1991), Misheck, takes up western education while remaining loyal to his heritage and the black political party. When asked why he serves two masters at the same time, his response is that he gets western education simply to prove that "an ordinary baboon like me can study and be as good as any white man" (Saidi, 1991, p.162). This mocks authority figures such as the principal at the federal school who assume that Misheck is under their authority when he is not. In addition, he defies the normally held view that western education is synonymous with white superiority by taking up the education himself. In this way, Misheck subverts the dominant discourse and mirrors this chapter's objection of hegemonic tendencies such as those characterising the failure to acknowledge that the novel is made up of more than indigenous oral narrative influence.

At the same time, we witness how the oral narrative trickster archetype is broken down into pieces and reconstructed into an entirely new multicultural trickster in the novel. The oral narratives tricksters are usually smaller animals such as Anansi the spider (West Africa) or Kalulu the hare (Central and Southern Africa) that managed to oust bigger and stronger opponents using wit and trickery (Finnegan, 2012). Such trickery is often appropriated during resistance against more powerful colonial masters and slave owners in Africa and the Americas. In a similar way to Anansi the spider, resistance to colonialism in many colonies, such as those in the Caribbean, was often under the guise of "a blatant Europhile, following colonial customs in an exaggerated way" (Slana, 2014, p.36) while actually mocking the coloniser. This is clearly the case with Misheck's masquerade as a law-abiding civil servant at the school where he works, and how he takes off the teaching mask, as a party member, to challenge the very things he advances as a teacher (Saidi, 1991). The use of a modified version of the oral narrative trickster in narratives and imaging of colonial resistance underscore the dynamism governing oral narrative images. This also means that, while oral narrative mnemonic images may be co-opted into the novel, they may be modified to fit into the cultural environment of the novel. As such, the images may no longer be pure signifiers of orality or oral narratives.

Masking and unmasking enables one to observe multiple sides and cultural layers of the novel. Specifically, this kind of deception in which the oppressed wore a subservient mask before their masters but took them off when on their own, was a common form of resistance in many colonies. In his analysis of the art of resistance by colonised people, Scott (1990) categorises the two types of personalities as public transcripts and private transcripts, respectively. In most cases private transcripts remained hidden, ignored and overshadowed by the public transcripts. It is for this reason that it becomes paramount to observe both hidden and public transcripts in order to get the complete idea of the multifaceted environment of novels such as *Day of the Baboons* (1991). The fact that the reader is privy to both the masked and unmasked protagonists in the novel allows one to witness the development of multicultural or multi-voiced images or individuals. Further, and in a way similar to the public and private transcripts, protagonists such as Misheck manage to resist and deceive the federal government into believing that they are subservient. Thus, the protagonists challenge the autonomy of the dominant narrative or culture in the colonial environment of the novel, by telling a story other than the dominant one. The multicultural mnemonic images produced by the masks in the novel reveal that there is a narrative other than the single narrative of indigenous narrative influence on the novel's images. This obliterates the idea that mnemonic devices are pure representatives of the oral narrative counterparts.

In addition, the material ensconced in Misheck's teaching job at a federal government school places it within the more multi-vocal environment of the novel and not the indigenous oral narrative society. Colonial education brings together different aspects such as the "Cause of the historic split between Henry the Eighth and the Church of Rome" (Saidi, 1991, p.145) and "tales of the freedom struggle in Ghana and the impending problems of the Belgian Congo" (1991, p.158) that are taught in the school. By all means the school institutes heteroglossia in the way it instils a diverse culture. It ascertains the view that the topography of language and culture goes beyond spatial boundaries but can be symbolic of cultural geographies, which comprise the coming together of different cultures from different spatial areas in one place. The coming together of different cultures as one diverse cultural entity or image breaks the novel from its referential relationship to the oral narrative image which is limited in cultural coverage. Furthermore, this means that the signifier is devoid of absolute meaning and in Derridan (1974) terms must be considered as the centre of heterogeneity. Thus, the novel's images must be viewed in light of the

multiculturalism that adds more cultures to those already at work in the indigenous oral narrative image.

The deceptive mask image also ironically illustrates the coming together of different political ideologies and perspectives in the novel. This substantiates the Bahktinian (Bahktin, 1981) idea that the novel brings together different ideologies from all walks of life which complement each other without privileging one over the other. The barber man mask allows Abednego to get away with things such as holding political meetings at the barbershop and storing diverse political material prohibited by the federal government. His cover allows him to pose as an uneducated man and remain inconspicuous even when he "borrowed books from the library and supplemented his political education through reading newspapers" (Saidi, 1991, p.180). Furthermore, his secret identity makes it possible for him to interact with other people who hold different political ideologies such as the Polish lawyer without suspicion. In fact, after one of their meetings, "Abednego and Zeb carried booklets on British trade unionism, the Fabian Society, Polish communism, the October Revolution in Russia and a summary of the communist manifesto. There were also pamphlets on the Cuban revolution and dialectic materialism" (Saidi, 1991, p.215). The above affirms that *Day of the baboon*s (Saidi, 1991) is characterised by diverse political ideas and perspectives. Nonetheless, Abednego can get away with having such material in his possession under the guise of an illiterate barber man since anyone would assume he is illiterate and unlikely to possess and read subversive political material. His success at deception, therefore, allows us a glimpse of the culturally diverse and multi-voiced environment of the novel that cannot be representative of a linear ancestry but rather multiple cultural influences.

There is a sense in which the novel uses deception to obliterate and at the same time turn over cultural hierarchies in a subtle way. This emulates Derrida's disruption of logocentricism on the premise that it creates binary pairs or thinking which creates hierarchies in which one binary pair, in this case culture, is considered superior to others. This is specifically noted in the surreptitious manner in which Shadrach and Esther, together with Ambrose and his wife manage to distract the Grants (their bosses) from detecting their involvement in the political party while making the missionaries think that they are in charge. The servants are expected to be Christians by their missionary masters and so they wear masks of faithful Christians by taking part in all prayer sessions and lessons assigned to them with feigned naivety. Accordingly, the three servants avoid

asking questions with political inclination during lessons. They abide by the "No politics with the Bwana and the Donna" (Saidi, 1991, p.65) warning from their party branch leader Zeb. Thus, Shadrach's breaking of this rule in one lesson resulted in strange looks and Esther's reminder to him: "…that was not a very clever question. Zeb has told us never to rile the Bwana and the Donna with such questions" (Saidi, 1991, p.66). There is a sense in which power has cunningly shifted from the missionaries to the servants without the missionaries realising it. The servants wear masks depicting one culture, which is Chritianity when (in a similar way to the novel in general) they are ironically multicultural in identity and interaction. In other words, and in true Bahktinian (Bahktin, 1984) style, the role of the masks is to unseat the linear ancestry theory with its tendency to favour mono-cultural influence from Zambian indigenous oral narrative tradition.

In fact, it is only through the deceptive masks that we observe that the novel, unlike indigenous oral narratives, breaks cultural barriers. That is taking into consideration that the oral nature of oral narratives (and their audience) limits the spatial and cultural reach of its characters. Even when the narrative involves strangers, they are treated as outsiders and not easily assimilated into the society of the oral narrative. In the novel, the insider outsider lines are broken by the almost borderless cultural interaction characteristic of the carnival. The servants' pretended Christian naivety makes Mr and Mrs Grant develop an unsuspecting philanthropist attitude towards their servants. For instance, they are supportive to Shadrach and Esther when they get married and later during Esther's labour and subsequent death. In addition, Mrs Grant often "…spoke directly to Esther, for whom she reserved a special, sibling warmth" (Saidi, 1991, p.32). This kind of deception, which breaks class and cultural boundaries, is reminiscent of Threlkeld-Vent's (2017, p.111) comment over Gerald's use of a figurative mask in Bennet's *The Old Wives Tales*. That is: "Gerald uses his deceptive mask to breach the barriers of class that should protect Sofia from his kind." Likewise, Shadrach and his colleagues subvert the status quo by instilling so much confidence in the missionaries that they manage to break whatever social class boundaries exist between them. In so doing, they similarly disrupt the dominant discourse which advances a linear cultural influence from indigenous Zambian oral tradition which is characterised by limited intercultural relations. Metaphorically, this speaks to how the deceptive masks unmask the reality of the novel which is characterised by the free interaction of different cultures without privileging one over another

2.2.2 Deconstructing Linear Continuation from Oral Narratives using Images of Public Places in the Novel

This section focuses on the way public places in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) serve as a meeting place for different kinds of characters and enables them to interact in complex ways that reduce the social distance among them. Public places may be considered in the light of Bahktin's (1984, p.243) idea of place as a chronotope of encounter or meeting after which any possibility of linear or monological existence is disrupted. In other terms, public places may be viewed as a metaphorical road on which "spatial and temporal paths of the most varied people –representatives of all social classes, estates, religions, nationalities, ages-intersect at one spatial and temporal point". First, in *Day of the Baboons* (1991), we observe different cultures (both white and black) coming into Zambian urban areas contending for both political and social space. As Absolom or Abednego's stepfather observes about the whites in the novel, "[s]ome of them are not Boers, you know, sonny. Some of them come from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, some even from Germany" (Saidi, 1991, p.175). In addition, the black characters are a combination of characters such as Ambrose and Abednego from the Eastern Province, Misheck from the Southern Province and Shadrach or Mwansa from the North East part of Zambia. Therefore, the above indicates that mnemonic images born from inter-cultural interaction such as the one described above can never be pure descendent or signifiers of indigenous oral narratives which have limited cultural coverage.

In *Day of the Baboons* (1991), public places defy logocentric relations with indigenous oral narratives through deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation (Deleuze, 1987) of characters and culture in the novel, which bears new cultural relations and images. When people are uprooted (deterritorialised) from one place there is always a sense in which they seek to make another place their home. As Deleuze and Guatarri (1987) point out, the desire to reterritorialise or own new territory is often strong when people move from one place to another. The textual public places, such as the shebeen, which bring together different characters from different places offer a possibility for the birth of intercultural relationships as noted in that which develops between Misheck (the black teacher) and Ma Dhlamini (the coloured proprietor of the shebeen). In the case of the other South African coloureds, (who come to Zambia to get away from the domination existing in their country), the desire to gain territory leads to conflict when the coloureds try to exercise racial superiority over Misheck whom they insist is inferior because he is black:

> 'For a black sem you play good piano jong (friend)…

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'You too are a black sem?' Misheck asked softly.

'What? Me? Voet-sek man. Look here, man. I am coloured, see? Born in Cape Town. I don't live with all them black sems.'

'Your father, was he Welsh?' Misheck asked, in a needing voice

'No man. My mother was Welsh. Voet-sek, man. Why you ask me all them stupid bloody questions, man?'

'So,' Misheck said, 'your father was an African, a black sem…'

'So your father was a black sem, like me eh,' Misheck said…The room was quiet, except for the insane giggling of the woman with the European laugh.

You know Sisi, 'Misheck said deliberately, not taking his eyes off the eye patch. 'I hate these half-Europeans. Even in our country they want to ape the white man. They think they are Europeans."
(Saidi, 1991, pp.104-05)

Misheck feels undermined when one of the coloureds, Mr Hughes makes a condescending comment about him and then he retaliates by pulling Mr Hughes down. The scene demonstrates how the novel brings together different cultures that are able to master their new territory either by mutual interaction or in dialogic conversation. The possibility of such cultural diversity and evolution of cultural relations in the novel suggests that the novel's images cannot be a static signifier of the indigenous oral narrative images alone. According to Derrida (1974) binary thought is obliterated by the fact that since the sign (the shebeen scene) can no longer be a signifier of an absolute signified (indigenous oral narrative images) only, then the sign in the novel is opened up to cultural polysemy or multiculturalism.

Furthermore, the shifting reins of power associated with multicultural places, such as the shebeen, often result in topsy-turvy power relations among different classes and categories of people.[6] This can be illustrated with the case of colonies such as Jamaica in the Caribbeans where, intercultural exchange or creolisation often led to "a 'new' construct, made up of newcomers to the landscape and cultural strangers each to the other; one group dominant, the other legally and subordinately slaves" (Brathwaite, 2003, p.202). This often resulted in unclear power relations, especially in the more significant creolisation cases involving sexual relations between ruler and slave (p.203). Whites continued to resist the cultural exchange and insist on their superior autonomy in spite of

the newly existing cultural constructs and unclear power relations. In a similar way, the coloureds at the shebeen continue to stress their cultural superiority on the basis of the biracial identity when ironically they are products and symbols of creolisation themselves. However, Misheck challenges and reminds them that being light skinned cannot be synonymous with superiority because they carry black blood too. In so doing, Misheck distabilises Mr. Hughe's self-imposed superiority making it clear that in the multicultural society of the novel, cultural hierarchies and boundaries are unclear or non-existent. This nullifies the logocentric view (Derrida, 1974) of some cultures as more representative of originality than others and also the idea that the influence from oral narrative images is more representative of the Zambian novel because it is closer to orality, nature and the truth or logocentre.

The shebeen scene further breaks the novel's ties to indigenous oral narratives because it resembles the Bahktinian carnival where all rules governing intercultural interaction and hierarchy are suspended. Public places such as the shebeen are similar to a metaphorical marketplace which represents:

> A peculiar second world within the mediaval order and was ruled by a special type of relationship, a free, familiar, marketplace relationship. Officially, the palaces, churches, institutions and private homes were dominated by hierarchy and etiquette, but…on feast days especially during the carnivals, this force broke through every sphere and even through the church. (Bahktin, 1984, p.154)

In a similar way, the interaction and conflict between Misheck and the coloureds at the shebeen is a reflection of the diverse and cultural relations taking place in the Zambian urban areas during the federation days in the novel. The urban areas became the meeting place for indigenous Zambians such as Misheck and his family who had migrated from rural areas and foreigners such as the coloureds from South Africa. The situation is in so many ways akin to the carnivalesque atmosphere of the war period in Zimbabwe which Viriri (2013, p.71) states brought together "…all these different actors in the war…employing different dialects, from high to low, from stylish and euphemistic language to direct and physical means." The shebeen shows us that the novel, in similar ways to Bahktin's carnival, breaks cultural barriers by bringing together cultural actors. Different actors or individuals may sometimes have conflict because the multicultural environment of the novel allows unrestrained expression of different cultures. This opens up the novel to

limitless cultural combinations with regards to mnemonic images. This also means that the images in the novel must not be tied to or limited to ancestry from indigenous oral narratives, where mnemonic images are born out of a homogenous cultural entity in which the people concerned willingly or unwillingly accept.

Furthermore, the shebeen scene makes a spectacle of the pretentious nature of the self-appointed authority of the coloureds in the multicultural environment of the novel. This metaphorically disrupts and mocks the view that the multicultural environment and the mnemonic images of the novel are associated with a single ancestry or authority. Bahktin (1981, pp. 356-357) postulates that a multicultural space, such as the shebeen and society in general, comprises "prim but moribund aristocrat-languages, with parvenu-languages and with countless pretenders to the status of language which are all more or less successful, depending on their degree of social scope and on the ideological area in which they are employed." The different categories concerning language may be extended to culture and races, which possibly operate in the same way. The coloured society at the shebeen may be considered in the light of 'pretenders' to status (of the language commanding power) or 'parvenu' in a sense. Thus, the coloureds are wearing masks of superiority and Misheck strips them of this mask when he exposes them as imposters in his exchange with Mr Hughes. We further observe how the public scene at the shebeen makes a spectacle out of the coloureds' self-appointed superiority. In much the same way, no one cultural influence must be awarded dominance over the multicultural novel without considering the other cultural forces at work. Hence, the novel must be viewed in light of the possibility of flexible cultural interaction and formation of culturally diverse mnemonic images.

The above also account for the use of parody, laughter and satire to mock and draw attention to the claim of one culture to power in the culturally diverse environment of the novel. In similar ways to the Bahktinan (1984) carnival, much of the spectacular in the scene comes from the satirical description of the coloured characters and laughter in the scene. The ridicule we observe in the exchange between Misheck and Mr Hughes is emphasised by the earlier comic description:

> 'This is Mr Hughes, his wife and his brother,' she said pointing to a thin tubercular man without front teeth. There were hollows in his cheeks, his eyes staring out of their sockets as if ashamed of coming any nearer lest they be questioned about the cheeks. He had thin, greying hair on an oval-shaped head…The second Mr Hughes had an eye patch and a bald head. His cheeks were full, with

a smile that came in unheralded, melodramatic bursts, like lightening. It was marred by two missing front teeth. His voice went with roguish face, a deep, hoarse, chain smoker's voice. Misheck was not introduced to a thin woman who sat next to the man with an eye patch. She laughed her European laugh when he was introduced to eye patch. (Saidi, 1991, p.104)

The description of the coloured characters in this scene mirrors the classical memory of images as shown by the affinity towards vivid and hence memorable descriptions of the coloureds. Contrary to the mnemonic role of such images in oral narratives, the parodic description and subsequent argument between Mr Hughes and Misheck draws attention to the fact that, unlike the vivid images of oral narratives, which mostly comprise of a single cultural allusion, the images in the novel are culturally diverse. In a way, the comic description enunciates the cultural diversity in the novel that one would not notice if none of the cultures was called out in this way. As such, the shebeen scene dismantles any views that privilege a single cultural superiority and influence. At the same time, the idea that mnemonic devices in the novel are solely influenced by indigenous oral narrative mnemonic images, is challenged in the multi-cultural environment of the novel.

The shebeen scene in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) further invokes laughter and consequently undermines the authority of cultures and views that try to impose their authority on others. Derrida (1974) challenges logocentric thought for the very reason that it results in dichotomised ways of perceiving things with one party being considered as better than the other. It is from this background that Europeans, like the coloureds at the Shebeen, constantly thought of Africa as its 'other'. The unrealistic nature of such self-proclamation of cultural superiority is evident in the mockery of the coloureds at the shebeen and is especially obvious in the woman who laughs with the 'European laugh'. She laughs twice in the scene for no apparent reason with the second time happening during Misheck and Mr Hughe's delicate exchange when the room is quiet except for her misplaced giggling. By implication, such laughter plays an important role in carnival subversion. The laughter, especially the European laugh from a non-European, mocks the pretentiousness of the coloureds and in so doing delegitimises their assumed cultural authority in the scene or image. As Lachman (1988-1989, p.124) observes: "in laughter there occurs a 'second revelation', a second truth is proclaimed to the world." As a second revelation, the humour unmasks the coloured characters and pours scorn on views that privilege one cultural influence in the novel while ignoring the other cultures present in the novel. The mockery suggests that no

single culture is more representative of the novel than others as is the case in assuming that images in the novel descend from oral narrative tradition alone. That is, oral narrative influence must not be thought of as more representative of the novel simply because orality is considered primary to writing (according to logocentric and binary thought). In much the same way that mockery, caricature and laughter emphasise the absurdity of the coloureds' claim to power, it metaphorically ridicules the idea that multicultural mnemonic images in the novel can be linked to a single oral narrative ancestry. The more one tries to force the view on the Zambian novel in English the more ridiculous it becomes. This is because the attempts continually draw attention to the gap between the indigenous oral narratives and the mnemonic images in the novel. In addition, images born out of a more multi-cultural environment cannot be the same as those born out of a more homogenous society respectively.

2.2.3 Heteroglots and the Disruption of Linear Continuation from the Oral Narrative to the Novel

Mnemonic images in the novel cannot be considered as linear descendants of indigenous oral narratives because individual characters display characteristics of hetroglossia. Heteroglossia is not limited to a social group, for when a single person speaks or acts in a multilingual and multi-cultural society they are a heteroglot. Tjupa (2009, p.124) notes that such a heteroglot is a "social person," who is also a "speaking person," operates not with language as an abstract regulatory norm, but with a multitude of discourse practices that form in their totality a dynamic verbal culture belonging to the society concerned." Hence, the dynamism in verbal culture drawing on the complex society –typifying the heteroglot, establishes the metaphoric basis on which linearity is disrupted. The above argument can especially be related to the way in which the colonial environment in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) creates heteroglots or blacks in white masks[7] such as Abednego's stepfather, domestic servants and government messengers. Particular attention may be directed to the messenger at Misheck's school who behaves like a white person and speaks broken English: "I say good ruck to you bwana, sak you, saa" (Saidi, 1991, p.165). Obviously, aspirations such as these displayed by the messenger and other black characters in the novel, result in a character that is neither black nor white but who combines different cultures and becomes a culturally diverse and multivocal individual. This goes further than the one-dimensional characters of the oral narrative that are usually familiar or archetypal for easy retrieval from memory in the absence of writing (Ong, 2002). Heteroglossia of this nature points to the fact that the novel opens

up its images to cultural diversity, which goes beyond images that require formation and familiarity with the indigenous oral narrative society.

Heteroglots disrupt cultural distinctions between individuals in the novel thereby breaking signifier/signified relations and any other binary distinctions between oral narratives and the novel. In focusing on such characters, this section considers the Derridan view that: "if as Saussure argued, signification is determined by the system of differences wherein each sign is inscribed, rather than by the presence of a signified inside or outside language, then it is clear that language has no centre. Signifier and signified are both involved in difference" (Atkins, 1983, p.40). That is, if the meaning (signified) of the image in the novel (signifier) is located outside the novel (indigenous oral narratives) then the indigenous oral narrative image (signified) is both outside and yet part of the multicultural image (signifier) in the novel –the signifier and signified are co-existent. Hence, while the messenger is supposed to be a signifier of blackness (signified) in *Day of the Baboons* (1991), he also signifies whiteness (signified) by mimicking whiteness. At this point the signifier and signified involvement obliterate the view of binary opposition in difference. It is for this reason that the unclear distinction between races or binary opposites raises questions about who signifies a friend or enemy in the present novel where cultural loyalty is critical to the success of the struggle for independence. This is clear in Esther's concern over the threats made by the fictional black officer from the Special Branch: "He makes me wonder sometimes, about our enemy. Is it the European who sits on us or some of our own people, who spit on us?" (Saidi, 1991, p.65). The question then is whether every black man is a friend and every white man an enemy, bearing in mind there are some whites such as the Polish lawyer or Mr Grant who are friendly to blacks. The cultural overlaps concerning individuals in the novel mean that there are many cultures, including indigenous oral cultures working to form the novel's images. Therefore, the novel's image must not be viewed as a signifier of indigenous oral narratives but rather as a complement in which the differences or opposites contribute to the cultural diversity of the novel.

Although we recognise that the caricature one witnesses with heteroglots in the present novel is typical of indigenous Zambian oral narrative mnemonics, this does not suggest that they are an absolute cultural ascendency from indigenous oral narratives. Evidence of the above mnemonic method (vivid caricature) is present in indigenous Zambian narratives. Of note is a *Bwile*[8] tale about a barren woman who magically acquires a child made of beeswax and when the girl grows

up and marries, her husband is warned never to expose her to the sun (Cancel, 2013). The tale is a mockery of the way mothers of the bride pamper their daughters when they marry. The analogy of a girl made out of beeswax that is vulnerable to heat makes the mockery effective and easier to remember than ordinary characterisation. Ong (2002, p.68) emphasises that "colourless personalities cannot survive oral mnemonics. To assure weight and memorability, heroic figures tend to be type figures." This limits characterisation to archetypal characters usually drawn from a cultural repertoire shared by the oral artist and his audience. Characters such as the messenger and others in *Day of the Baboon* (1991) that try to speak and act as if they are white in the midst of ignorance are satirised. Their lamentable failure to imitate the white man arouses laughter and consequently contributes to their weight as memorable characters. While the beeswax maiden gets her colour from local environment, characters in the novel get theirs from the multicultural environment of the novel. The overall effect of the memory of images in the novel lies in the infiltration of indigenous African behaviour by the western language and behaviour. As a result, although we witness similarities in the vivid and memorable characterisation found in the indigenous oral narrative and the novel, the images in the novel are born from a more diverse cultural environment than the limited cultural environment of the oral narrative. This also underscores that the images in the novel are not absolute signifiers of their oral narrative counterparts.

2.3 *Patchwork*

2.3.1 Disrupting Linear Ancestry from Indigenous Oral Narratives using a Bricolage of Neat and Messy Patchworks

This section presents the argument that rather than being comprised of images from indigenous oral narrative tradition alone, the novel is made up of a combination of different cultural elements. This idea is drawn from Derrida's (1974) view of a novel as a bricolage and the novelist as a bricoleur who simply brings together scraps and pieces he/she wishes to use without special attention to cultural orientation of the pieces. Therefore, the title of the novel, *Patchwork* (Banda-Aako, 2011) is an apt metaphor for the bricolage imagery and the resulting heteroglossia and carnivalesque in the novel. The title is an important paratextual[9] image and a recurring motif in the core narrative of the novel that enforces the idea of diverse images coming together in one novel and society. On the one hand, are mnemonic images that are neatly stitched together and, on the other hand, are images portraying a messy patchwork of shifting power relations. The two

types of Patchwork are best illustrated by Sissy's conversation with Pumpkin (the protagonist) over telling lies (Banda-Aako, 2011). The bricolage and especially the patchwork image in the novel under analysis also enforces the idea demonstrated earlier in my analysis of *Day of the Baboons* (1991) that the texts under analysis in this chapter do not have a pure image, or strict lines of separation and permanent hierarchies among cultures, social classes, religion, tradition and ethnicity.

2.3.2 Neatly Patched Mutually Inclusive Mnemonic Images

One of the effects of a bricolage on the novel is that the continued interaction of different cultural elements creates new relationships and neatly blended images. This means that oral narrative mnemonic techniques are used in the novel without necessarily producing exact images as those used in indigenous oral narratives. The mnemonic images highlighted here reveal that the novel is not made up of culturally stratified (binary opposites) images but images, which are a result of mutual inclusion and comprise different cultures. This kind of neat patchwork is best described by Sissy in her analogy as she teaches the character Pumpkin, who is the narrator and protagonist of the novel, that lying is bad:

> Lets say you hook it [a dress] on something and there's a small tear in it. What should you do?'
>
> Sew it.
>
> Sissy nods. You would patch it up to hide the hole. If you patch it nicely with small, neat stiches, using orange thread that matches your dress, will people be able to see that you had a tear in your dress? (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.117)

In this case if Pumpkin confesses to lying, the tear or damage caused on her reputation is mended neatly in a similar way that the neat stitches mend and hide any tear on the dress. The image metaphorically accounts for other images, which comprise multiple voices that are blended in a neat way such that one cannot easily separate them. As Drag (2016, p.55) reflects, Bahktin coins the term heteroglossia to accommodate the "novel's essential inclination to accommodate multiple and diverse languages and voices." In *Patchwork* (Banda-Aako, 2011)*,* the differences among voices are carefully camouflaged by the neat stitches holding them together. As is the case with the camouflage analogy with the patchwork, the images in the novel, comprising diverse cultures,

must be considered as complete and new images incapable of absolutely signifying indigenous oral narrative images or any other culture alone.

We further witness how hybrid constructions in the novel result in culturally double-voiced images that disrupt the idea of linear ascendency from indigenous oral narrative culture. The term 'hybrid constructions' was coined to refer to how a single utterance belonging to a single speaker may contain "mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages', two semantic and axiological belief systems (Bahktin, 1981, p.304)." Yet this can be used to elaborate the images or neat 'Patchworks' such as Pumpkin who is considered a single character while she is a bricolage or a complex individual (character) in which different ethnicities and other forces meet. Firstly, Pumpkin has two different birth certificates with two different names and ethnic orientation. This is the first thing the character and narrator tells us about herself in the prologue of the text:

> I'm two different people according to the Registrar of Births. My birth was registered twice... On the birth certificate my Grandma Ponga obtained from the registrar of births… my name is stated as *Natasha Ponga*. My other birth certificate delivered in a sealed envelope to my tata …my name is *Pezo Sakavungo*. (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.vii)

Not only does she have two names but the two names, *Natasha Ponga* and *Pezo Sakavungo* belong to two different ethnic groups –*Bemba* and *Lunda*. The peculiarity of the image created by the convergence of different cultures echoes the makings of a good memory of images but here we have the double voiced, hybrid construction characteristic of heteroglossia. In fact, the different cultural voices speaking here are reconciled by the neutral name, Pumpkin, which the protagonist identifies with most in the novel. The choice of the neutral Pumpkin as a nickname seems like a longing for oral narrative closure because the name Pumpkin is typical of oral stock names such as hare, spider or elephant. Yet the fact that it is only one among the other names the protagonist possesses, multiplies the identity of the sign or image into more ethnic voices than the oral narrative image would accommodate. This indicates that it is possible for indigenous oral narrative mnemonic methods to be blended with other cultures in the novel and create new images, which are unrecognisable as pure descendants of oral narratives alone.

Pumpkin's multiple identities make her identity unsettling and suggests that because of cultural infiltration, the idea of cultural purity is not as straightforward as it seems in indigenous oral narrative images. Derrida (1974) explains this unsettling cultural identity by arguing that the novel must not be viewed as absence of orality and the presence of writing or absence of one culture and presence of another at different times. Instead, the term 'presence' in the novel may be considered "…under erasure. For difference, producing the differential structure of our hold on 'presence' never produces such" (Derrida, 1974, p.XIIII). The results are images such as Pumpkin's mother who is a literal combination of two cultures as illustrated in the following ironic display:

> Ma never leaves the front door without her face matted in talcum powder and one of her wigs in place, but right now she's in the middle of Tudu court without her wig, her black hair plaited with purple thread because she claimed she couldn't find the black, even though it was sitting in the little basket on her dresser with all the other cotton reels. (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.12)

Here we witness a woman who has two cultural identities. One is the woman who wears a wig and powders her face like a westerner and on the other hand is the wigless natural, unpowdered indigenous African woman. This is reminiscent of the character Clementine in p'Bitek's (1980) *Song of Lawino* who is an African woman but is said to have taken up western traditions and paints her lips red as an ulcer, fries her hair, powders her face, wears dead people's hair and looks like a guinea fowl. Pumpkin's mother's satirical description makes a good mnemonic image but this image is made up of the multicultural society in which different cultures such as the western and indigenous African traditions inevitably interact. In addition, the blending of different cultures creates unsettling identities because the presence or absence of different cultures including indigenous tradition and orality is obliterated by their enclosure in the single but diverse image or bricolage.

In the novel, binary opposites such as oral literary aspects and writing (novel) work together in mutual inclusion creating new images that are a blend of diverse cultures. This perspective may be demonstrated by Soja's (1989) idea of postmodern geographies. This is the view that in order to unveil the heterogeneity of urban areas and the novel, there is need to move beyond the view of spatiality and physical space to a discussion on how physical space restructures social structures and relations. Soja (1989, p.191) notes that it is not the physical landscape that defines Los Angeles, for instance, but "the seemingly paradoxical but functionally interdependent

juxtapositions [that] are the epitomising features of contemporary Los Angeles." This can be related to the image of the housing complex in *Patchwork* (Banda-Aako, 2011) which at first glance and in physical terms is simply an example of a living space in the urban area. However, hindsight reveals that Kudu court is a combination of different cultures and a mixture of both indigenous culture and modernity. Apart from Pumpkin and her mother, the court has residents such as Uncle Oscar who epitomises modernity. Uncle Oscar is "an airline pilot who wears a navy blue suit with stripes on the sleeve and a peaked cap to work" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.28). Conversely, we have Bee's mother, the *Nganga (*witch doctor) and wife to the caretaker who is "always boiling, drying and soaking some part of a plant to use as medicine" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.19). Together these characters demonstrate new and old culture and how different images combine to create totally new images that define particular spaces at different times. As Soja (1989, p.235) envisions, new life stories are born in urban spaces as "some things fall apart, dissipate, new nodalities form and old ones are reinforced". More so the image of Kudu court acts as a metanarrative echoing Derrida's (1974) view on orality and writing in terms of binary complementarity as opposed to mutual exclusion.

The complexity and heteroglossia in the novel's images further lie in how cultural utterances manage to weave themselves into each other resulting in a single image consisting of intertwined cultures. This is what Volosinov (1973) terms 'an utterance within an utterance' that is so carefully woven that it is considered one utterance. A point of reference is the song playing at the bar as Pumpkin walks in to buy alcohol for her mother. She narrates that: "the jukebox at Sibanda's is blaring out a reggae song about a headman who steals from his people at night, then in the morning holds a kangaroo court to find the thief" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.13). It is one song, but one reads different cultural voices speaking and blended into it. Reggae first of all is not indigenously Zambian but one notices that it is blended with the trickster elements observed in the headman's behaviour. As illustrated by the deception motif in *Day of the Baboons*, this is a familiar archetype and mnemonic image in many indigenous Zambian oral narratives. Furthermore, since Kangaroos are not indigenously Zambian animals, it would be our understanding that the term Kangaroo court is not an indigenous Zambian term. Hence, the narrative is Pumpkin's but the song is an utterance within another utterance and this utterance also comprises other utterances in the state of diverse cultural voices. The complexity and Heteroglossia lies in both the tripartite utterance and the

cultural voices speaking. Such an image nullifies the claim to indigenous Zambian oral narrative ancestry because the image in the present novel comprises a blend of cultural voices from all over the world.

Patchwork (2011) further bridges the gap between orality and the novel by merging contrasting allusions. The common occurrence for binary thought would be the creation of polarised images, which completely exclude the other part of the binary pair. Yet, many images in the text forward the Derridan idea of language in free-play, which opens up the novel to "a tremendously creative and exhilarating possibility" (Atkins, 1983, p.47). This view is evidenced by the free interaction and merging of contrasting cultures and ideas in the novel. For instance, there is a scene at the *Nganga's* house that includes "a skinny man with a Bible on his lap" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.158). Similar comments may be made over the relations between literacy and illiteracy as observed when "Grandma Ponga tucks the wedge of notes smugly between two of the books" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.33). The fact that the old woman keeps a "wooden shelf weighed down by a row of green encyclopaedias (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.33)" simply for hiding money strikes as paradoxical since she is not literate herself. The ease and free-play with which two seemingly contrasting allusions merge in both images demonstrate that orality and writing must not be viewed as unlike poles in the novel but as different sides of the same coin. For this reason, the difference between the signifier (novel) and signified (indigenous oral images) become the order of the same.

The novel's bricolage status is also shown in the coming together of different narrative levels and double-layered image construction, which would not be possible in indigenous narratives whose oral medium would not permit such constructions. Bahktin (1981, p.358) illustrates that in most cases, the narrator's voice acts "as a "framing context" that, "like the sculptor's chisel, hews out the rough outlines of someone else's speech, and carves the image of language out of the raw empirical data of speech life." In this way, the narrator acts as a guide and commentator who alternates between his/her narration while moving in and out of different characters' speech. Such an image is reflected out in the discussion on the *ciNyanja* speaking Mr Prakash:

> '…An Indian speaking Nyanja.' Amos elbows me and jerks his head at Mr Prakash as we settle in the sofa.
>
> 'He's Zambian,' Job, who's sitting on my other side, hisses.

…'Zambian?' Amos opens his eyes wide, disbelieving.

'Not all Zambians are black, idiot,' Job says. (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.76)

Both the narrator's text (Pumpkin) and the other characters' (Job and Amos) texts (Schmid, 2010) contribute to heteroglossia or multiple voices in the scene. Pumpkin who is the narrator at the scene is a child but the discussion is also between children. On one level, Pumpkin may be considered an unreliable narrator as a child but one of the reasons an unreliable narrator is used is to make sure that "the narrator's lack of knowledge or experience" (Morgolin, 2009, p.360) drives the message home without the interruption and logic of an adult narrator. On another level, the reaction evident in Amos' direct speech is only plausible because of his naivety and innocence as a child. Such a reaction would not be expected from an adult Zambian but it is believable that a child would consider anyone different from them as an outsider. Hence, the choice of Pumpkin and her brother's perspective is effective in unravelling the mutually inclusive heteroglossia inherent in the Zambian society of the novel. At the same time, it challenges the tendency to consider orality and writing in binary terms whereby orality (in this case influence from indigenous oral narratives) is preferred as closer to an ultimate centre of origin. In such a scenario, writing (and other cultures) is considered an 'other' or outsider, which is in the periphery, and perpetually operates as a signifier of the more authentic oral narrative.

The novel further breaks the idea of indigenous oral narratives as a pristine logocentre by merging different temporal moments with contrasting cultures and traditions in one place. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the obsession with a logocentric point of cultural origin has been used to argue for the indigenous oral narratives as a permanent transmitter and source of frozen images even for the novel (Wessels, 2006). Yet, *Patchwork* (2011) illustrates two temporal moments or voices in the image where Pumpkin (with her narration) is transported as if hypnotised from the present moment to some unknown past as Sissy comforts her after being mistreated by her step mother:

Sissy holds my head against the soft cushion of her bosom…I smell the snuff on her uniform and I remember another place, another time. I'm fastened to a back with a Chitenge, my head bobbling up and down in rhythm to the movements made by a warm body. I'm peering over a shoulder into bobbling pots and wooden mortars. (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.53)

We know that Pumpkin's narration has shifted to sometime in the past when she is a baby on someone's back and yet in the present moment she is at her father's modern farm house. The fact that Pumpkin is transported to the past as if hypnotised by the snuff she smells on Sissy's uniform and only when she is troubled, can only mean a nostalgic longing for some unreachable past. This reminds one of those hidden unreachable desires which Freud (1955) suggests belong to the unconscious and are only released in dreams. Like nostalgia, Pumpkin's dream is similar to the obsession with mnemonic images in the novel, which signify a fixed or frozen indigenous oral narrative images. The fact that the pure cultural moment only exists in Pumpkin's dreams and imagination confirms that such an absolute and pure signified does not exist. Instead, the novel is a merging of different temporal moments into a bricolage.

Related to the above is how the novel forms a temporal and cultural bricolage by merging different cultural elements depicting different historical moments of different countries in one image. Scanning is an important mnemonic device used in oral narratives to create images that can be easily retrieved from memory by tying them to important collective historical moments of nations such as major battles or deaths and births of kings (Mcglyun, 2009). This orality-based mnemonic method is disrupted in *Patchwork* (2011) by the creation of images consisting of allusions to various historical events from various cultures and nations. Pumpkin's description of the Sakavungo (her father) sitting room can be noted: "on either side of the second table stand two wooden carvings of small African hunters with spears. The sculptures stand as if they are guarding the vase of pink-and-white flowers situated between them" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.44). Two temporal or historical moments are evident in that the spear-armed hunters may signify the African age of hunting common in many Zambian oral narratives depicting hunter heroes (Vyas, 1969; Cancel, 2013). At the same time, the flower vase seems out of place in the African world of hunters and more at place in a more recent image of an English drawing room. The fact that the Sculptures seem to be guarding the flower vase between them highlights the way in which both contrasting cultural voices co-exist in a single image. This demonstrates how the novel brings together different temporal moments and the signifier and signified in the same image – oral narrative mnemonic device and the multicultural mnemonic image in the novel.

2.3.3 Dialogic Images or Messy Patchworks as Disrupters of Autonomous Cultural Influence from Indigenous Oral Narratives

This section discusses images that disrupt the claim of authoritative influence from indigenous oral narratives because the images arise out of contentious dialogue among different cultures present in the novel. As espoused by Bahktin's (1981) discourse on the novel, one can literally observe language enter:

> …a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may crucially shape discourse, may leave a trace in all its semantic layers, may complicate its expression and influence its entire stylistic profile. (p.276)

This means that some of the novel's images are born out of the on-going process and cycle of conflict, reconciliation and readjustment that is characteristic of the continuous interaction of diverse cultures. The fact that the on-going process and cycle is evident in the shifting power relations and dialogue of some images, distinguishes them from images discussed in the previous section involving neatly merged cultures in mutual inclusion or bricolage fashion. As such, contrary to the analogy regarding neatly patched images, the idea of messy patchworks is derived from the scene in which Sissy warns Pumpkin about the consequences of being a serial liar: "Third time [you lie], patch it. And then what do you have? A big messy patchwork that everyone can see (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.119). Hence, although one observes the tensions and conflicts among different cultures in the novel, the shifting power relations ensure the formation of messy and unclear boundaries among cultures. The boundaries are there but owing to shifting power relations, they are constantly under erasure in a similar way to the difference between the 'e' and 'a' in Derrida's (1974) differànce which elides vision and hearing. These cultural dialogic conversations of conflict, momentary reconciliation and readjustment taking place in the novel challenge the signifier signified outside/inside relationship in which indigenous oral narrative influence is privileged over other cultures.

To begin with, one may consider the different speech types that are in constant dialogue in the novel and how they nullify any authoritative or influential hold that indigenous oral narratives may have over the novel's images. One observes different speech types in the novel, which co-exist always in conflict with one another. The view is related to Bahktin's (1984, p.53) analogy of the

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novel as a market place that brings together different "forms of familiar speech…. [and] These genres are not separated by a Chinese wall." The suggestion is that in the novel there is no hierarchical or interactional barrier preventing different cultures from conversing whether they have conflicting interests or not. The speech situation in the novel acts as a metanarrative that indicates the many cultural and social speech types present in the novel. As a result, such oral narrative influence must not be considered superior or the only influence or ancestor of the novel. The idea is evidenced in *Patchwork* (2011) where the extent to which Pumpkin envisions the social class gap between herself and her friend Bee is reinforced by her use of grammatically wrong English to narrate Bee's speech. Two competing voices are present in the way Pumpkin keeps her main narration in clear English but interrupts her narration using transposed free indirect speech (Genette, 1980) in the form of Bee's grammatically wrong English. This is evident in one instance where Pumpkin says: "Why your Tata buy your mother broken car?' Bee whispers" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.4). Although the novel has Pumpkin as an autodiegetic narrator, it is clear from the transposed free indirect method identifiable in cases similar to the one above that more than Pumpkin's perspective or voice is speaking in the novel. Clearly Bee's speech interrupts Pumpkin's speech and challenges her claim to authority and the view of Bee as her opposite who belongs to a 'broken English' speaking lower class. We continue to observe different Speech types in other characters in the novel and these include Sissy from Zimbabwe, the illiterate Grandma Ponga and the Indian cameraman, Mr Prakash. Hence, any authoritative claims of indigenous oral narrative ancestry or any other culture is interrupted by the many other speech types, cultural voices or heteroglossia in the novel.

One can further point to the use of grotesque imagery (related to the lower stratum) that turns the world inside out and hegemonic relationships upside down thereby drawing attention to our assertion that the novel accommodates diverse cultures which dialogue in dynamic ways. This is often the case with the Bakhtinian carnivalistic ritual in which "bodily excretions such as sweat, tears, blood, mucus, and semen violate the integrity of the separation of the body and the world, of the inside and the outside" (Mitchell, 2013, p.274). This is shown in *Patchwork* (2011) in the fight or quarrel between Pumpkin and Bee where Pumpkin fights Bee because of the belief that a girl from a class lower than hers should not talk to her in a way that threatens her high-class position. In carnivalesque style Bee levels the ground by reiterating Pumpkin's attack with the

toilet analogy that 'every man, he go toilet. And whether man is white, blue green, rich, poor, he shit. And when he shit, his shit smell!' (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.24). Similar references to bodily fluids are related to Pumpkin's mother who is an embodiment of the grotesque and is mostly described as either vomiting or "her hands are cold and wet. They smell of fresh fish. Her red nail polish is chipped" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.10). In both cases, Bee and Pumpkin's mother challenge their positions as 'other' in the binary pairs comprising Bee and Pumpkin on one hand and Pumpkin's mother and her lover's wife on the other hand. These grotesque images related to the lower stratum of the body are used by lower realms of society to challenge, expose and protest existing hegemonic relationships among different social classes in the novel. Thus, an environment where a signifier and signified constantly challenge one another, as shown in the conflict between Pumpkin and Bee or Pumpkin's mother and her lover's wife, cannot have one culture (indigenous oral narratives) as the only authoritative signified of the novel while other cultures are considered as peripheral 'other' cultures.

Furthermore, orality-based linearity is disrupted by the view that in one moment the novel, its characters and sometimes utterances, may seem to clearly signify indigenous oral narratives, while in another moment the same character might be portrayed by any other aspect of the written novel. This forwards Derrida's (1974) idea of alternating positions between signifier/signified which means in a single case a signifier, which may signify one thing in one moment may be a signified the next moment. This disrupts the idea of a straight line trajectory from indigenous oral narratives by accommodating other cultures and perspectives in the novel. We observe this in the face-to-face clash between Uncle Oscar the pilot and the two ladies who are fighting over him:

> A white Volkswagen sped into the complex and screeched to a halt outside Uncle Oscar's flat. The shrieking brakes had us all outside even before we heard a woman's scream and the shattering of glass. There we saw a man, Uncle Oscar, trying to wrestle two women apart. They were swinging their handbags at one another, over his head and under his raised arms. As we watched the white-and-green striped towel he had around his waist fell to the ground and he quickly bent down and grabbed it, tying it firmly around his waist again. The embarrassment of losing cover must have given him strength because he suddenly pulled the two women apart and asked both of them to leave. One of them, her ear dripping blood onto her shoulder, jumped back into her car and sped off, leaving her wig and hoop earring lying on the veranda. (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.28)

In one instance, Uncle Oscar signifies patriarchal power, but when roles are reversed power now signifies the two ladies fighting over him (sign). The fact that there is a temporary conflict and subversion of social positions between Uncle Oscar and the two ladies which is reversed immediately, does not preclude the fact that roles may be subverted at another time. Yet this is an on-going conversation which does not dismantle the image altogether but creates images whose power relations keep on shifting from one part of the image to another. As such, one must consider the interaction between the written novel and orality as alternations between signifier and signified respectively. Furthermore, indigenous oral narratives cannot be the only influence on the novel because the social dialogue found in the novel is shaped by a dynamic process of shifting and alternating interrelationships among various aspects of its images.

The previous argument concerning shifting and alternating interrelationships among various aspects of the image lead the discussion to consider the role of polysemous mnemonic images in discrediting the universality often accorded to the influence of indigenous oral narratives on the novel. The creation of meaning is a subjective process, which cannot be located in the fixity of one culture or interpretation because it is doubtful that the meaning of any single image can ever be interpreted in its entirety. This is the point behind Bhabha's (1994, p.63) observation that the danger with allocating certain images in the novel the title 'original cultural attributes' is that it might not include those ahistorical moments, which because of their failure of subscription to the historical moment, are not considered. That is possibly the problem should we ignore the ambivalent implications of Uncle Oscar's fight on his identity and social position as observed in Ma and Pumpkin's reactions to it. After the fight, Pumpkin's mother tells her friend that: "…because her neighbour can't handle his business the children in Tudu Court don't respect him, as they have all seen him in his underpants" but Pumpkin argues that "She was wrong. On behalf of the children of Tudu Court I can honestly say that we respect Uncle Oscar" (Banda-Aako, 2011, pp. 28-9). It is clear from the two post-fight contesting views on Uncle Oscar that, subjecting his status to one meaning would be an injustice to the other facets of his personality. The identity of the smart pilot who has girls fighting over him is not so certain after the fight. This is reminiscent of Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) disavowal of defining people under fixed categories such as 'identity' which cannot account for everything they define. As observed in uncle Oscar's case, the fight reveals other possible identities consisting of varied character combinations. Thus, images in

the novel must be opened to the possibility of signifying any or a combination of different cultures conversing in the novel. The influence from orality must not be viewed as the original and universal signifier or influence on the novel but one of the other influences on the novel.

In fact, some images in *Patchwork* (2011) act as metanarratives that depict the manner in which the authority of images purely represent indigenous oral narratives are challenged in the novel. This is in light of ritualistic public acts of decrowning, which ordinary people (especially clowns and fools) who masqueraded as authoritative figures in parodic fashion performed during carnivals. This decrowning and degradation of "authoritative representatives bear out a sense of bringing it down to the lower level of everyday life and contemporary reality (Bahktin, 1984, p.19). This is synonymous with the research's occupation with dismantling the authoritative claim of indigenous oral narrative influence on the novel. One can point to Pumpkin's description of Ma's parodic and spectacular display when *tata's* (Pumpkin's father) car passes them while they are waiting for a taxi by the roadside:

> She shakes her head at me stiffly, as if she doesn't want to show she's shaking it, and squeezes my hand hard, making me wince….
>
> Shhh, she hisses again, out of the corner of her mouth as she loosens the grip on my hand. She coughs, shudders and stands straight. The gentle tug on my arm tells me to straighten up too...
>
> Ma's shrill laugh cuts through my daydream….
>
> I know Ma's mind, like mine, is on the dark green Mercedes rolling towards us…passengers in passing cars continue to stare. I feel like they can see through us, that they know that the young lady with long legs in a cream-and-black polka-dot blouse and black sling back platforms, holding the hand of a fat girl in a white-and-blue checked school uniform, are pretending to share a joke. I feel they know we are pretending to be happy. (Banda-Aako, 2011, pp.7-8)

The whole point of this spectacle is Ma's illustration of the fact that *tata* is her lover nullifies any social distance or superiority or difference between the married couple in the car and herself. Hence, the image is both the presentation of a challenge and a glimpse at an alternative or 'other' narrative often overshadowed by the dominant discourse of *tata's* marriage and official wife. This view is not far from Nyambi's (2013, p.ii) conclusions over "literary responses as sites for the articulation of dissenting views…and challenging the state's grand narrative of the crisis" of post-

2000 Zimbabwean society. The significance of the decrowning act to both the Zimbabwean case and particularly the novel is that it metaphorically dismantles any hierarchical distinctions among different cultural players in the novel. In a similar way to Ma and her lover's wife relationship to *tata*, all characters in the novel have potentially equal chances of influencing the novel's images. Hence, the influence from indigenous oral narratives must not be viewed as preferentially superior to any other cultural influence on the novel.

In addition, there is a way in which decrowning and removal of hierarchical distinctions in the novel through laughter allows the free-play and culturally dynamic creation of images in the novel. During the carnival, people can express themselves in an unrestricted and creative way only if existing hegemonies are removed or ignored. Bakhtin (1981, p.23) asserts that it is the laughter of the carnival more than anything that:

> …demolishes fear and piety before an object, before a world, making of it an object of familiar contact and thus clearing ground for an absolutely free investigation of it. Laughter is a vital factor in laying down that prerequisite for fearlessness without which it would be impossible to approach the world realistically.

As such, Ma's laughter in the scene cited above gives her confidence to level up to her rival (*tata's* wife), unlike in the case of the coloured female character's laughter in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) which emphasises pretentiousness. In the moment, Ma probably believes she is in control and for a second thinks that *Tata* might choose her over his wife and family but this is short-lived when *Tata* and his family leave her stranded by the roadside. Ma's temporary freedom to express herself, allows one to witness what a hierarchy free society would look like. It also leads to the conclusion that the novel is not a site where images are restricted to interaction with and influence from indigenous orality. Rather it is a place, which as Derrida (1974) suggests, allows for the free-play of language, different cultures and styles (including oral and written) without intimidation and obligation to an absolute or single signified.

The above analysis of *Patchwork* (2011) metaphorically speaks to this researcher's suggestion that indigenous oral narratives and other cultures (in the novel) are mutually inclusive and interdependent players in the Zambian novel in English. This view echoes Derrida's (1974) views on the complementarity of binary opposites, which means that, whether the images in the novel

are as neat as the neat patchworks or as messy as the messy patchworks, indigenous and other cultures still co-exist in the novel. On the one hand, the different parts (oral and written culture) in the novel need each other to exist meaningfully as a whole. Alternatively, the different parts, which are in conflict would not be in conflict without the other party. This is the same conclusion that the novel and specifically Pumpkin wishes to communicate at the end of the novel. She remembers Sissy's response to her about how people can be separated into clear opposites of bad/good, loved/hated and so on: "Love and hate is same-same" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.65), Sissy tells Pumpkin when she questions how Sissy can still love her husband who is often violent and disrespectful to her. As if to sum up the novel's idea of mutually inclusive binary opposites, the novel closes with the same statement but this time from Pumpkin: "Sissy was right: love and hate, same-same" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.216). The reference to the subverted version of 'binary opposites', love and hate, reflects the fact that indigenous oral narratives map themselves on the novel not as an opposite but as a complement and not as a transcendent signified or origin of the novel.

One also discovers that the novel and its images, which are born in a multicultural environment, cannot be viewed as signifying indigenous oral narratives alone. Such a view is one sided and is characteristic of a single story which favours one point of view at the expense of others. As Adichie (TED Global, 2009) puts it, the danger of a single story is that "it creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story the only story." That is why in order for Pumkpkin to be content at the end of *Patchwork* (2011); she must accept that life is simply a patchwork of different aspects. At this point, Pumpkin realises that despite her father's many mistakes and multi-faceted identity, the different angles gave him his identity as she states, "it was his life and his messed up patchwork" (Banda-Aako, 2011, p.216). Her father's patchwork consists of his mysterious past with grandma Ponga, his failed love affair with Gloria and Ma, his erectile dysfunction and eventually his death in a car accident at the side of Salome (the young lady Pumpkin suspected had an affair with her husband and fought with). Similarly, when Pumpkin meets Bee later on in life she realises that "Bee's memories of our relationship seem different from mine" (p.196).This is because their childhood rivalry, which was based on a superiority complex, influenced the single narrative that Pumpkin had about Bee. Nevertheless, we recognise that Pumpkin's condescending attitude towards Bee

has disappeared at this point in the novel and that is why she no longer narrates Bee's speech using grammatically wrong English as she did when they were children. Therefore, it is pertinent to consider the novel as not simply a signifier of indigenous oral narratives and to avoid the single story by considering all the other cultures present in the novel.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that the Zambian novel and its images are not mere representatives and predecessors of indigenous oral narratives. It revealed the novel as a site where different cultures, including the indigenous oral narrative tradition, interact in dynamic ways. As such, the research deconstructed the dominant narrative governing the relationship between indigenous oral narratives using Derrida's (1974) rejection of logocentrism on the basis that it propagates the idea of a pristine origin, transcendental signified or centre of meaning in much the same way that indigenous oral narratives are assumed to have autonomous influence on the novel. Furthermore, the discussion on the multiple cultural voices (heteroglossia) and the obliteration of cultural hierarchies (carnivalesque) in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) and *Patchwork* (2011), showed the numerous possibilities of intercultural interaction in the novel. The multiple cultural voices in the novel demonstrate that the novel and its images can never fully refer to indigenous oral narratives as a transcendental centre of meaning. Secondly, the fact that different cultures interact in the novel without clear or consistent hierarchy means that indigenous orality is not superior to any other culture represented in the novel.

The discussion further illustrated how the novel brings together different cultures, beliefs, ideologies and people in a way that goes beyond the limited cultural coverage of the indigenous oral narrative. This is observed in the heteroglossic images comprising of many voices and narrative styles that are present in the novel and result in mutually inclusive images that accommodate diverse and distinct cultures, ethnicity, religion and social classes. In both novels, place becomes an important space in which carnival-like, market-place or cross-road-like interaction can take place (Bahktin, 1984). For instance, Kudu Court in *Patchwork* (2011) is defined by different ideas, old and new, which are presented through traditionalists such as the *Nganga*, on one hand, and the modernists, such as the pilot, on the other hand. Similarly, different characters, such as the coloureds from South Africa and the local Zambians, who possess different beliefs and ideologies interact at the shebeen in *Day of the Baboons* (1991). Furthermore, one

observes the coming together of various ideas and belief systems in the material taught at the federal school and the political material that characters, such as Abednego, encounter. As such, the novel with its exposure and convergence of different cultures cannot be a pure signifier or representative of indigenous oral narratives or culture.

Another observation made, is that when different cultures interact in the novel, cultural hierarchies are suspended by the different cultural conversations taking place in the novel. That is, some cases, such as the neat patchworks in *Patchwork* (2011) or Misheck and Ma Dhlamini at the shebeen in *Day of the Baboons* (1991), result in the convergence of different cultures in agreement. In other cases, the conversation is one of disagreement. The latter is demonstrated by the carnivalesque images such as the shebeen in which the quest for re-territorialisation leads to conflict when the coloureds attempt to demonstrate authority and superiority over Misheck. The fact that Misheck challenges the coloureds and strips them of their authority agrees with this chapter's discouragement of thinking that favours polar opposites or stratification of the novel as a representative of one culture over another. In addition, it challenges the instigation of cultural hierarchies in which indigenous oral narratives are considered superior to the other cultures present in the novel.

The discussion underlined that new images are born and others re-shaped to suit the more multicultural environment of the novel when different cultures interact. This may be observed in so many ways in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) where Shadrach becomes culturally double-voiced when he moves to the city and becomes a Christian and traditionalist at the same time. In another way, the oral mnemonic device of trickster is used, but in Misheck's case, his perpetration of trickster involves wearing two cultural faces. Hence, although the mnemonic method remains the same, it is contextualised to the novel's multicultural environment. However, in both cases, the resulting different cultural voices or heteroglossia mean that the novel's images have more than one cultural voice speaking. Furthermore, the fact that the images undergo transformation into new ones, as a result of the cultures they interact with, breaks the linear ancestry from the indigenous oral narrative.

For the most part, mutually inclusive heteroglossic images confirm that the Zambian novel in English is not a mere signifier of indigenous oral narratives. In most cases when new images are born in the novel, the different cultures blend so well that it is not easy to break them down into

separate cultural entities. All this goes to show Derrida's (1974) view of the complementarity of opposites or the way in which the signifier and signified map themselves on each other in such a way that there is no difference between signifier and signified. It is for this reason that Shadrach in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) is confused about who he really is because his identity no longer lies in any of the cultural poles he interacts with but in a combination of the two. The images in the novel become even more complex when a single character such as the heteroglots or black 'men in white masks' are taken into consideration. The same is observed in the bricolage like neat patchworks such as Pumpkin or Ma Ponga in *Patchwork* (2011). In fact Ma Ponga's identity is complex because it is a combination of a western and traditional woman in both dress and mannerism. In other words, indigenous oral narrative images map themselves on the novel's images in such a way that the novel's image cannot be simply a signifier of the oral narrative image since the signified (oral narrative image) is already a part of the new image. Hence, instead of linearity from the oral to the written, the novel's images either add or subtract something to oral narrative images that breaks the straight line from oral narratives to the novel that is often imagined.

The fact that no culture is superior to another is observed in the chapter's illustration of the mockery of cultures that try to claim authority over others in both novels under analysis. The role of masks, decrowning and grotesque images in the Bakhtinian carnival (Bahktin, 1984) was for the lower realms in society to parody , ridicule and subvert authority. For instance, the deceptive masks worn by Shadrach, Misheck and Abednego in *Day of the baboons* (1991) satirise the federal government by making them believe that they have power over the protagonists. Yet, behind the masks, the trio are in control of their own black party affairs and their own narrative. The same can be said about the comic description of the coloureds together with the coloured lady's European laughter which parodies and makes their pretentious claim to authority satirical. This is the case once again in *Patchwork* (2011) where Ma and Bee's grotesque behaviour has the effect of challenging and decrowning Tata and Pumpkin's authority, respectively. All in all, the subversion of authority unseats the dominant culture from their position of power and reveals what a society turned upside down and inside out would look like. In all the instances from both novels, the lesson is that any claim to authority by one culture or person is obliterated by the other cultures that have an equal stake in the novel.

In this way, the chapter demonstrated that positions of power and by extension signifier/signified positions in the multicultural environment of the novel do not remain the same but keep on changing. This is particularly observed in Carnivalesque images such as Ma's reaction to the presence of Tata and his wife in the car by the roadside in *Patchwork* (2011). Here we observe how power relations shift from the upper class, to the lower class and back to the higher class. It further echoes the earlier conclusion concerning the scene in which Uncle Oscar fights with the two ladies. This can be extended to the different styles at work in the Zambian novel in English. One may identify double-layered narration in the scene between Pumpkin and her brothers at one moment. Yet in another moment one may observe the communal narrator or narration of the oral narrative. That is, the relationship between signifier and signified is one of constant alternation between signifier and signified. The possibilities revealed, are reminiscent of Derrida's (1974) idea of the free-play of language that allows for the unrestricted interaction and alternations between signifier and signified. Hence, it becomes difficult to assign cultural influence to indigenous oral narratives when influence keeps on changing from indigenous oral narratives to other cultures in the novel.

Therefore, the chapter revealed that the danger of polarised thought or adamantly sticking to the dominant discourse that indigenous oral narratives are the only influence or ancestor of the novel's images, is that it prevents one from getting a complete picture of the multicultural nature of the novel. This is the lesson one learns when they fail to look beyond the masks that the three protagonists in *Day of the Baboons* (1991) wear or the public display or transcripts that the servants at the Grant house portray publicly. This includes the other narratives from Bee or Ma Ponga in *Patchwork* (2011), whose existence is forced on the reader by their grotesque public display before figures of authority. Therefore, all cultural, hierarchical, temporal boundaries between cultures in the novel are obliterated by the heteroglossic, carnivalesque and multicultural images discussed in this chapter. While other images are being born in the novel, others are modified to suit the more cosmopolitan society of the novel. In addition, while the mnemonic techniques in the novel are descendants of oral narratives, the images are not. What we have in the novel is not simply a linear continuation from oral narrative to the novel but an on-going dialogic conversation between indigenous oral narrative images and the multicultural images in the novel.

Endnotes

[1] The multicultural environment of the novel is the fictional world of the novel, which comprises different Zambian and other cultures that the author creates or brings together in the novel.

[2] Although William Saidi was born and published many works in Zimbabwe, his novel *Day of the Baboons* may be classified as Zambian because of its Zambian setting and content.

[3] Ruth Finnegan (2012) asserts that one of the most important distinctions between oral and written literature is the distance between the composer and the audience.

[4] Gerard Genette (1980) distinguishes zero, external and internal focalisation with zero focalisation being similar to the traditional omniscient narrator all-knowing position, external focalisation involving a narrator that knows less than the characters and can only follow the action of the characters without access to their thoughts, and Internal focalisation having a narrator who is, in most cases, the protagonist and knows as much as some characters and can read their minds. However, the narrator can only view things from this character's perspective. Depending on focalisation, a narrator can either be heterodiegetic in the sense that he or she tells a story that they were not a part of or homodiegetic if they are part of the action in the narrative and lastly autodiegetic if the narrator is the same as the protagonist.

[5] Jan Vasina explains how the cuing, as a mnemonic method, assists in storing information in oral societies. This involves attaching a concept or information to a cue that one can easily remember so that when one wishes to retrieve that information from memory, the cue comes easily to mind.

[6] The term is used by Threlkelt-Dent (2017) to explain the result of subversion of power by women in Victorian novels which is characterised by confused hierarchy and unclear power relations.

[7] Such characters epitomise Frantz Fanon's (2008) arguments regarding the effect of racism and colonialism on the identity of the black subject. In many cases blacks tended to mimic the behaviour of the colonisers in all aspects including language.

[8] The Bwile are a minority ethnic group belonging to the larger Bemba ethnic group found in Northern and Luapula provinces of Zambia.

[9] The idea is related to Gennete's (1980) idea that aspects, such as titles, have an influence on the core narrative of the novel and reveal important information about the main narrative.

Chapter Three: Deconstructing the Fixity of Meaning from Orality to the Novel: Differànce and the Play of Signification in the Zambian Novel

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy: Thou art thyself, though not a Montague. What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot, Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part Belonging to a man. O, be some other name. What's in a name? That which we call a rose By any other name would smell as sweet; So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd, Retain that dear perfection, which he owes Without that title, Romeo doff thy name, And for that name, which is no part of thee, Take all myself .'
(Shakespeare, 1997, 2.2:40-50)

3.1 Introduction

The idea that images or signs in the novel are a linear continuation and pure signifiers of indigenous oral narratives continues to be the basis on which the claim for the existence of a pure 'African' and 'Zambian' novel is founded. The excerpt above from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1997) is an apt opening for a chapter focused on deconstructing the idea of fixity of meaning in relation to the sign in the novel. Juliet is justified in her observation that the only thing limiting Romeo from loving whoever he chooses is the Montague name because it limits signification to a fixed signifier which comprises of a feud and enmity to the Capulet family. The fixity and limited play of signification is broken when Romeo falls in love with Juliet, a Capulet, and this opens up the play of the sign (Romeo) to unlimited possibilities. Analogies can be drawn between Romeo's dilemma and the tendency to limit and tie 'signs' (signifiers) in the Zambian novel in English to oral narratives (absolute signified) as evidenced in some studies such as Krishnan (2014); Mbwayu (1987) and Chilala (2016) reviewed in the first chapter of this study. Whilst there is seemingly nothing wrong with this kind of research, what is at fault and rejected by deconstructionist projects, such as the one I undertake here, is "the fixation on some 'specificity' at the exclusion of all else in view of the fact that 'all else' structurally props up the 'specificity'" (Nunyen, 1989, p.35). Hence, there is danger in the one sided assumption that all African novels in English are simple linear replications of oral narratives. This is because such an approach limits itself to fixed signifier/signified relationships at the expense of opening up the sign to the play of signification and denies the much needed eclectic study of literature.

This chapter aims to deconstruct the idea that the novel and its images are signifiers or pure antecedents of indigenous oral narratives. The fact that this centre of meaning or signified is always outside the novel and its images means that it probably also refers to a signified that refers to a centre of meaning outside the signified. In the previous chapter I discussed how linear continuity from indigenous oral narratives is disrupted by multicultural, heteroglossic and carnivalesque images in the novel. In the present chapter I argue that the novel and its images can never be a pure descendant of oral narratives because the "signified concept is never present in itself, in an adequate presence that would refer only to itself. Every concept is necessarily and essentially inscribed in a chain or a system, within which it refers to another and to other concepts" (Derrida, 2004, p.285). The questions I attempt to answer are: Can a sign which has no inherent meaning be considered a pure ancestor of another sign if both signs are devoid of meaning? What occupies that space –a sign being empty of meaning? What is it that we actually observe in the space where the sign should be? The answers to these questions will assist in unpacking the idea that both the sign and the signified are empty of meaning and that what we witness in their place is the play of chains of substitutions, detours, supplements and traces but never a tangible signifier or descendent of oral narratives.

A breaking down of a sign in the novel into components of meaning or signifier/signified terms to try and establish the relationship with oral narratives shows that the signified is absent and consequently the signifier has no autonomous or present meaning. I suggest that rather than linearity from oral narratives, Derrida's (1974) notion of differànce accounts for and compensates the emptiness of meaning and the resulting play of signification. This is because differànce involves detours, disruptions, difference and deference that never lead to any transcendental signified. As such, this chapter examines the nature of differànce in Musenge's *Changing Shadows* (2014) and Luangala's *The Chosen Bud* (1991). The aim is to establish how signs in *Changing Shadows* (2014) that are constantly evolving are exiled from time or others in *The Chosen Bud* (1991) that have deferred narrative voice are not identical even when repeated or translated institute differànce. The aim is to establish how differànce in the two novels deconstructs the discourse of linearity from the oral narrative to the novel.

The idea of differànce grows out of Derrida's (1974) rejection of the logocentric and structuralist idea of meaning which stipulates a fixed relationship between a signifier and its signified. Derrida

(2004) postulates that if the sign, as structuralist and logocentric thought argues, is simply an arbitrary signifier of something that is itself absent or always refers to some centre of meaning outside of itself respectively, then the idea of signifying is more complicated than this:

> Henceforth, it becomes necessary to think… [of] a central presence which has never been itself, has already exiled itself for anything which has somehow existed before it. Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions come into play. (Derrida, 1978, p.333)

It is this non- locus in which deferment and difference come into play that Derrida terms differànce. So instead of a central presence that refers to a signified, what we have is a series of non-fixed loci that refer to other non-fixed loci and hence empty and dynamic signs involved in a never ending chain of signification. This can be extended to oral narratives meaning the articulation of non-fixed loci is seamless. In fact the only reason it seems that we can ground signifiers in oral narratives is because the need for mnemonic consistency related to orality camouflages the fact that images or signifiers differ (even slightly) from one narrative to another. If this is the case, then images in the novel cannot be considered to refer to indigenous oral narratives as a fixed signified because such a centre of meaning does not exist. The term differànce is considered the best representation of the sign's centrelessness because it too does not correspond to any sensibility or meaning. That is, it does not represent any autonomous centre of meaning to which it refers or is referred to. Derrida (1974) gives the name differànce to the ungraspable and illusive sign because the word differànce, just as the sign, does not really exist. For this reason, the word is spelt with an 'a' which is never pronounced and hence constantly under erasure. From the very moment that Derrida replaces 'e' with an 'a' (which eludes sight and sound and is never pronounced) in the word difference, he defies phonetic rules. As such, both the letter 'a' and the word differànce become silent and devoid of meaning within the conventional structures of meaning. Going by the same phonetic rules the term differànce has no name and no longer exists. This is the best description of signs or images in the novel, which cannot be grasped because they are always slipping away to other moments. Therefore, the signs in the novel with their empty, ungraspable identity cannot be relied upon to be pure antecedents of indigenous oral narrative images.

The idea of differànce can further be explicated with the idea of presence and absence.[1] By virtue of being empty of meaning in itself, the signifier always represents a presence (signified) which is always absent, meaning the signifier is never a true presence. Hence, what we have is not only a chain of signifiers but also the play of absence and presence. This is because the arbitrary nature of the signified and meaning of the sign means that,"we cannot grasp it in the "present moment", because that present moment is always passing away, presence is shadowed by the death of presence, its shutting past into the oblivion of the past. Similarly, any current present moment bears in it the future present moments towards which it is moving (Derrida, 2004, p.278)." If the present cannot be relied on as a stable present as theorised by Derrida, then it becomes unreliable to imagine it to be a signifier of oral narratives, which become unreliable signifieds or presences the moment that they are articulated or introduced into the picture. This chapter analyses the unstable relationship between signifier and signified, especially in relation to oral narratives as an absolute signified. As a result, the chapter focused on different images in Musenge's *Changing Shadows* (2014) and Luangala's *The Chosen Bud* (1991) in order to examine the nature of images in the novel, in this case postulated as unreliable, fluid and oblivious.

The term differànce combines two French verbs; 'defer' and 'difference' to explain the play of signification that takes place in the empty presences or empty signs or images of the novel and oral narratives. Firstly, all the meaning of the sign and by association oral narrative mnemonic images in the novel must first be sought in deferment. That is, the sign must be considered as that which "bears in it the future present moments towards which it is moving. The differences between these presents constitute the present we attempt to grasp as something substantive before our minds" (Derrida, 2004, p.278). Secondly, the sign gets its meaning from its differences with other signs. According to Derrida, "any spatially locatable object of thought or idea has an identity or presence of its own only by differing from other things" (Derrida, 2004, p.278). If one uses the epigraph as an analogy for explication purposes of what happens in the novel, it follows that Romeo's identity as a Montague and enemy of the Capulets is shadowed or erased by the fact that he falls in love with Juliet in the future. His identity therefore lies in the differences between the two points and not on either of the two individually. One further recognises that his identity comes from his association with other things. For instance, in one moment he is an enemy of the Capulets because of his association with the Montague family but in another he is not an enemy because of

his relationship with Juliet. In the same way as Romeo's case noted above, the novel's images, which are characterised by difference and resulting fluidity, can never refer to a particular or original signified in indigenous oral narratives.

It follows that images in the novel cannot be pure signifiers of oral narratives because instead of having autonomous or absolute meaning from oral narratives, they simply carry traces of the empty presence that inhibits the oral narratives as a centre of meaning. It is this trace and never an absolute signified that moves forward in the chain of signification. As such, "the trace is not a presence but it is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces and refers beyond itself" (Derrida, 2004, p.294). In other words, the trace's pronouncement already bears traces of something that it is supposed to signify but, which is never a full presence. At the same time, it is becoming past of what is 'present' –the past, present and future all at the same time. Hence, this study is interested in exploring these traces using images in the novels to test how they are empty of meaning in themselves but simply postpone meaning to other moments which themselves simply postpone revelation of the sign or full presence further. This is because just like the chain of traces and postponements we observe in the images of the novel, whatever came before it is not an absolute signified but simply part of this chain of traces or absent presences of the lack of origin as Derrida (1974) puts it. If the revelation of the signified or meaning is deferred indefinitely then it follows that the image in the novel cannot be considered a linear continuation or pure signifier of the oral narrative image.

In addition, what we have in the novel are chains of supplementary substitutes that produce only a sense of the 'presence' they defer and never the anticipated pure image or sign. This is because the absence of a signified creates a 'lack' that must be filled by a supplement or pseudo presence. As Derrida (1978, pp.365-66) suggests:

> This movement of play, permitted by the lack of absence of a center of origin is the movement of supplementarity. One cannot determine the centre, which supplements it, taking the centre's place in its absence-this sign is added, occurs as a surplus, a supplement. The movement of signification adds something, which results in the fact that there is always more, but this addition is a floating one because it comes to perform a vicarious function, supplement a lack on the part of the signified.

The above quotation underscores the idea that the lack of a signified in the sign creates a need for compensation but the compensations simply defers the sign further because it too is not the sign.

This indicates that, although the novel, as we observed in Chapter Two, adds a multicultural dimension to oral narrative images, this is only part of the unending chain of supplementarity. Furthermore, the supplement at each point in the process of signification is simply a detour and an illusion of a presence that may never be located because it may never have existed in the first place. As a result, this study examines whether an image that plays a supplementary role in the novel can ever signify or have a pure referential relationship to indigenous oral narratives or any sign that it is purported to signify.

The implication of differànce on the study of the Zambian novel in relation to linearity and oral narrative ancestry is very clear. This is because the dominant discourse supporting linearity has often viewed every Zambian novel as representing static indigenous oral narrative images. However, the discussion on differànce and signs depicted in Musenge's *Changing Shadows* (2014) and Luangala's *The Chosen Bud* (1991), demonstrates that a deconstructive analysis of the signs is necessary to detect the fluid and altered signs that exist in the novel. Such an approach opens up the novel to the play of differences and deference and makes possible aspects that are rarely considered in ordinary discourse. Yet, what I suggest here is not a prescriptive alternative to the polemical and sequential relationship between oral literature and the novel. Rather, I suggest that the meaning of the novel's signs must be sought in those gaps, the absence of the signified and the different detours in the chain of signification. In so doing we help to break the Zambian novel in English from an entrapment in the illusion of a sealed ancestry from indigenous oral narratives, specifically oral narrative mnemonics.

3.2 *Changing Shadows*

The novel is set in pre-independence Zambia and is in the form of a bildungsroman that depicts the struggles of the protagonist Mwila to succeed amidst conflicts between colonial culture and her indigenous culture. She is expelled from a Catholic boarding school she attends and is forced to go back to the village where she lives with her parents. She later relocates to the city with her uncle in the hope of continuing her education. In the city she soon learns that it is not easy to find a vacancy for school, let alone a job. Instead, through her the author explores the conflict between the conservative understanding of virginity, marriage and the modern culture of the city as she tangles with pre-marital sex, abortion and eventually gets married as a second wife to a rich man (Kangwa) many years her senior. After his death, she gets an opportunity to study journalism in

the United Kingdom, returns a more confident woman and gets married to Hamaundu, a man she met during her studies abroad.

3.2.1 Evolving Signs as Unreliable Signifiers of Indigenous Oral Narratives in the Novel

This section discusses ways in which signs that are constantly evolving in the novel cannot be considered pure ancestors or signifiers of indigenous oral narrative images. I base this argument on the premise that the signs have no stable meaning at any stage in their evolution but always represent an elusive, meaningless and non-permanent entity. Significantly, the signs epitomise the ungraspable presence of differànce (Derrida, 1974; 1978; 2004), which cannot easily be deciphered in what they were before, what they are or what they will become. As soon as signs move from one transition stage to another, they obliterate this presence by becoming and therefore endlessly deferring identity to the next point in the on-going chain of evolution. What we have instead and what we discover from studying the round characters in *Changing Shadows* (2014) are traces and temporal detours, which add something different to the sign and reflect the on-going deferment and nonexistence of stable identity. This is unlike the mostly archetypal mnemonic characters of the oral narrative. In fact, Ong (2002) suggests that the round character as we know it, is specifically and uniquely a creation of the novel or writing. Hence, there is no way that the ever-changing character or sign we observe in *Changing Shadows* (2014) can have independent meaning as a sign or be trusted as a representative or descendant of another sign such as the oral narrative image.

Firstly, the identity of the sign or round character in this case, is seldom if ever, fully revealed because it is undergoing semantic evolution throughout the novel. It is also possible that at every point of enunciation we only get a glimpse of different traits that make up a 'whole' which may never be revealed in the text or novel. Derrida (2004, p.292) likens such an observation to the Freudian 'unconscious' which is "…not as we know it a hidden, virtual, a potential self-presence. It is deferred –which no doubt means that it is woven out of differences… but there is no chance that the mandating subject 'exists' somewhere or that it is present or is 'itself'". In like manner, the round character in the novel is never a presence that you can identify distinctly but comprises of many different characteristics that come up as the narrative progresses while deferring full revelation of identity indefinitely. Notably, the delay and fluidity associated with fully identifying Kasongo, the brother to the protagonist Mwila in *Changing Shadows* (2014), exemplifies

deferment and hence the play of differànce in the text. Particularly, Kasongo's identity shifts from educated man, to mentally disturbed and eventually to educated, working young man, in the course of the novel. Furthermore, Kasongo's character eludes us and each time we think we have grasped his full identity; it becomes but an illusion, which quickly gives way to another dimension of character revelation. As a result, the fluidity or changeability in Kasongo's character makes it difficult for the reader to assign him any specific identity because the possibility of further revelation of his full identity still lingers up to the end of the novel. There is no knowing how far before and after the text this play can go because "This extends the domain and the play of signification indefinitely" (Derrida, 1978, p.333). Hence, if one decides to assign signifier status to any sign in the novel it becomes unclear at which point the sign can be considered an autonomous and meaningful signifier and descendant of indigenous oral narratives.

Furthermore, the round character in the novel can never be a pure representative of indigenous oral narratives because of the different detours or substitutions of the sign that multiply it, facilitates and is always a step away from further pseudo revelation of the sign. The detour is one sense in which language mediates empty meaning and non-presence of the sign through differànce or deferment. As Derrida (2004, p.284) postulates, "to defer in this sense is to temporalize, to resort consciously or unconsciously to the temporal and temporalizing mediation of a detour that suspends the accomplishment or fulfilment of 'desire' or 'will'". Therefore, what we have is not the sign but 'representatives or proxies' delegated by the sign but since these are never a replication of the desired identity, it means that the detours and substitutions are simply that and never identical to the desired sign. This is evidenced in *Changing Shadows* (2014) where the changes, representatives or substitutions for Kasongo's disposition are mirrored on the people surrounding him. The villagers' attitudes towards him fluctuate from respect to ridicule and disrespect and back to respect and admiration, in parallel fashion to the changes in his character. This is because Kasongo, Mwila's older brother, is the first person in both his family and the village to have been educated to the level of a Master's degree. The villagers' different reactions at different times illustrate how his identity at each instance is a different representative from the previous or subsequent one. In addition, these differences, multiply and make the image plurivocal but without any full presence of the sign or an exact image of anything within the novel or outside it. This means that if we assume that the image in the novel is a continuation from indigenous oral

narratives then they are equally involved in this play of differences, detours and substitution and possibly never an absolute signified oral narrative image.

At each point of the evolution process the different detours, substitutions and representatives of the sign act as supplements that add something in an effort to fill up the 'lack' or gap created by the logocentric assumption that the meaning or signified of the signifier lies outside the sign and the novel. This means that one supplement (in form of substitutions and detours) must be supplemented by a string of supplements in order to have a semblance of a centre of meaning and attempt to fulfil the desire of an absolute signified from oral narratives in this case. In Derrida's (1978, p.365) words, "this movement of play, permitted by the lack or absence of a center or origin is the movement of supplementarity." In other words, supplementarity is made possible by the fact that the lack of a signified within the sign results in the availability of an infinite number of possible signifiers all being added to the chain of signification in the hope of finding the right one. For instance the word 'tree' (sign) may refer to many possible specific trees and lack of specification would result in countless and endless guessing of which specific tree is being referred to or signified, as I discussed in Chapter One. Yet, the many substitutions and representations of the sign are floating signifiers incapable of grounding any stable meaning that would represent or provide a linear continuation from oral narratives. The change that is evident in the naïve village girl at the beginning of *Changing Shadows* (2014) and the confident, professional Mwila at the end of the novel is evidence that the different milestones Mwila experiences have each added another dimension to her identity. Mwila is first expelled from school in the village before moving to the city where she loses her virginity to Bwanga leading to a pregnancy and a near fatal abortion and marriage later as a second wife to a married rich man, Kangwa, until he dies. She then attends university in the United Kingdom where she meets Hamaundu a Zambian living in the United Kingdom whom she marries when they get back to Zambia as she launches her career in journalism. All these experiences are a chain of supplements in an attempt to grasp her full identity because it is certain that her life and experiences may extend beyond the novel. Hence, the order of signification from oral narratives to the novel's images and beyond is a chain of supplements as noted in the gradual additions of different traits to Mwila's character with neither decipherable origin nor grounded meaning and end. This is because the signified does not exist within the sign, as is the case with Mwila's fluid character and this provides further evidence that the sign can

never be a pure representative of any signified such as oral narrative image because it is constantly changing face as another trace is added to it. If this is the case, it means that when oral narrative images undergo similar process of supplementation their entry into the novel is as part of the chain of supplementation and never as pure ancestors of the novel.

In addition, the idea that the chain of supplementation is without decipherable beginning or end means that the images in the novel are not absolute signifiers of oral narratives because they carry and consist of traces of the past, soon becoming past and the future. Put succinctly, once an indigenous oral narrative image enters the discourse of the novel, it disappears immediately as other aspects in the novel affect it and then it disappears further as that moment gives way to another temporal moment in the novel. This is because the sign or identity "constitutes what is called the present by this very relation to what it is not, to what it absolutely is not, that is, not even to a past or future considered as a modified present" (Derrida, 2004, p.278). The only reason a sign has presence is because it carries traces of what it is not at any specific moment – other moments. For instance, Kasongo's true identity in *Changing Shadows* (2014, p.21) is differed to the future at all times but carries traces of other moments. In contrast and in reference to his uneducated background, Kasongo is first introduced to us as the pride of his family, village and entire chiefdom and then when he suffers from mental health issues he becomes three people at once – that is the person he was before, the mentally unstable person and assuming he gets better, the future him. Therefore, the three-tier relationship that a sign has with the past, future and present means that the image in the novel can never solely signify the indigenous oral narrative at any moment because the moment is always shadowed by 'otherness'. This brings us to the conclusion that if we assumed that oral narrative images were co-opted into the novel, they would not be pure descendants of their predecessors because they would carry within them traces of oral narratives, their present identity and a future to which they were fast moving. This also means that the image in the novel does not simply continue in replication from oral narratives.

It must also be stated that if characters, such as Mwila and Kasongo discussed above are considered mnemonic, their memorability stems from the play of temporal detours, traces, supplements deferment and plurivocity –differànce which makes them surprising and unique. This is unlike the oral narrative mnemonic characters that would have to be type characters in order to be memorable. As Bankhan (2006, p.148) argues, mnemonic /character includes "unique or surprising

events that disrupt the schema-based expectations of their hearers". We observe this kind of disruption in the unexpected, fluid and diverse character traits that keep surfacing, while coincidentally deferring full revelation of Mwila and Kasongo's identity indefinitely. In fact, at the end of the novel, we cannot trust Kasongo who is depicted as having different traits at different times as fully developed or archetypal in the oral narrative sense centred on type characters. When he eventually gets better, it is as if we now meet the real Kasongo but if we consider the novel as a text it is possible that his identity is yet to be deferred indefinitely.[2] In this way, Mwila and Kasongo appear as mnemonic characters and yet they are not absolute signifiers of oral narrative mnemonic type characters. In addition, they do not comprise of a signified within them and open up to the play of substitutions, proxies, absences and presences in the hope of revealing the missing signified. As a result, round characters in the novel do not qualify as irreducible signifiers of oral narrative characterisation because the novel in its written form is capable of creating mnemonic characters in a way that would not fit easily in the oral narrative medium. These images cannot indeed be a mere replication or continuation from oral narratives.

3.2.2 Temporal Exile and the Disruption of Linearity from Oral Narratives

I argue that, images in the novel cannot be considered a linear continuation from oral narratives because they represent moments that are exiled from time and hence incapable of representing a transcendental oral narrative image that is frozen in time. This is because confining the sign to the finitude of time is synonymous with the logocentric (Derrida, 1974) preoccupation with a centre of meaning outside the sign, which ironically closes up the play of the sign to a forever absent signified. On this basis, Derrida's (1974; 1978; 2004) differànce deconstructs absolute signifier/signified relations on the premise that the sign is always empty of meaning but still carries traces of the past, present and future signified it lacks. The fact that three temporal notions (past, present and future) are pronounced at the same time exiles the notion of linear time as we know it and exposes another time because this 'other' time is always "an accelerated movement that runs more quickly than time itself, beating it to its end" (Carotenuto, 2018, p.78). The arrival of the desired signified heralds the beginning of another cycle of signification. I therefore, contend that the delay in communication among the Bemba tribe and the use of letters to communicate Kasongo's madness or the letters surrounding Mwila's expulsion from school in *Changing Shadows* (2014) exemplify the manner in which time is exiled through postponement, deferral and failure for immediate communication. One moment, as is the case in the scene where Mwila's

illiterate father receives the letter about Kasongo's mental instability, is always empty of distinct meaning. This is because Mwila's father cannot read and has to wait for Mwila to read it for him meaning that the signifier does not refer to any transcendental signified but is always a suspension or delay or hesitation in the revelation of the sign. At the same time, this represents the exile of temporal chronology and liberation of the novel's images from the temporal confines of linear continuation from oral narratives. The reliability of the sign in the novel or oral narrative as a transcendental signifier/signified is annulled by its failure for immediate communication. This institutes differànce and abolishes the possibility of autonomous and meaningful signs capable of being pure signifiers and representing a pure signified from oral narratives.

3.1.2.1 Play of Silences; Escaping Temporal Chronology

The image in the novel can never be an absolute signifier of oral narrative images because the constant external and suspended articulation of the signified opens up the sign to the play of silences that escape temporal chronology and linearity. This is because in the absence of a tangible presence of the signified, the emptiness or silence becomes the articulated presence. The desired signified is not found in what we observe on the surface because the surface is always empty of meaning in a similar way to the inaudible 'a' in differànce, which eludes vision and hearing but is the articulated present –the play of differànce, 'a term itself under erasure' (Derrida, 2004). The suspended and empty presence articulated by silence "…invites the impossible possible, the transgressive, irruptive moment which reveals (revels) in the pause, the breath, the silence –a speech act full of what the speaker didn't mean to say and the researcher didn't mean to hear" (Mazzei, 2007, p.20). This is what one observes in the transmutation of the concept of funeral from its village version to the city version in *Changing Shadows* (2014). When Kangwa, Mwila's first husband dies in the city, the villagers that attend his funeral contrast it with his mother's funeral earlier in the novel and observe that Kangwa's funeral:

> …was a big show which lacked close personal involvement. Unlike their village funerals where the villagers donate food, make the coffin, dig the grave, and bury the dead, they saw that all these where highly commercialised in Lusaka. They couldn't understand why, for instance, instead of women washing Kangwa's body, this was done at the funeral parlour at great expense; instead of using Kangwa's van to take his body, an expensive hearse was hired from the funeral service; instead of making a simple coffin which would quickly rot away in any case, a very expensive coffin was bought; and so forth. (Musenge, 2014, p.178)

On the surface, the city version of the funeral is articulated as presence yet the villagers' observations and introduction of traces of the village version of a funeral introduces another time (the past) from the shadows/silences or void created by the fact that this funeral is different from what the villagers are used to. Hence, instead of the villagers' expected signified, concepts of now and then are exiled as something else emerges in the silence – a play between signifiers (the village and city version of funeral) that do not signify either the village or city version of funeral. Therefore, images in the novel may carry traces of oral narratives which get involved in the play of difference in the novel but are never the sole origin of the signs.

Furthermore, it is not the anticipated signified but something that provisionally stands for three temporal moments (the past, the present as a representative and the signified), which is deferred to future revelation. This situation can best be exemplified with the delay in communication of news associated with the Bemba[3] convention where a visitor can only state their reason for visiting once they have been fed and rested as depicted in *Changing Shadows* (2014). One particular instance is when Mwila returns home following her expulsion and her parents and family have to wait till she has eaten and settled before questioning her untimely return from school (Musenge, 2014, p.17). During the period of waiting, Mwila's relatives engage in other talk but the unspoken and suspended presence or news is lurking in the air as absence but at the same time articulated in silence. We later observe the same need for silence in the nature of courtship among the Bemba. As we observe in the relationship between Mumbi and Kasongo, even after Kasongo's family has approached Mumbi's family for her hand in marriage an engagement period follows before the two can consummate the marriage. In a similar way to the speculations that articulate themselves in the temporal silence over Mwila's real reason for coming home, the engaged couple can only visit each other in the presence of the girl's siblings while other preparations unrelated to marriage consummation are taking place in the period of waiting. In both cases, whilst the surface chronology exists, there is the other atemporal play of silences, which is outside the dominant chronology. In this way the play between the speculations and the real reason for Mwila coming home for instance represent the other present that is in abeyance but present in the speculations at the same time. The speculations, the surface chronology and the lurking present presence disrupt the chronology and immediate communication of Mwila's expulsion. This disruption of linearity

can be applied to the argument that images in the novel are facilitated by the play of silences since their signified (oral narratives) is always deferred and exists outside of the novel.

3.1.2.2 Non-Diachronic Signs

In addition, the idea of temporal exile evokes the idea of non-diachronic existence of signs, which abashes the idea of images in the novel referring to an origin or centre of meaning. This means that images in the novel should not be viewed in light of their linear temporal development from oral narratives to the novel but rather from their fluid existence in the never-ending cycle of signification. Langlois (2015, p.20) likens this Derridan thought to the radical atheist view that "death is synonymous with eternity and immortality…and conversely that life is synonymous with surviving finitude and rejecting desires for presence and transcendence." This means that before the enunciation of death as an absolute signified what one observes is simply the play of difference or proxies or silences as one awaits death. Yet, when death finally comes, it is not the anticipated signifier for it also signifies eternity and immortality –a new beginning. In the same way when Mwila finally tells her parents and other relatives about her expulsion, the revelation itself simply opens up the signifier/signified relationship to indefinite play. Many rumours emerge in the village concerning the reason for Mwila's expulsion one of them being that "she was caught making love to her boyfriend and that she was no longer a virgin" (Musenge, 2014, p.28). The same infinite deferral is evident in the issue concerning Kasongo's mental health breakdown where the surface narrative gives us second hand information from the narrator, his parents and his friend Matthew while the 'other' narrative, which is Kasongo's narrative perspective, remains an articulated silent presence. I, therefore, suggest that the other perspectives are simply detours that emerge to cover the silence of Kasongo's narrative which is deferred indefinitely. This illustrates that in Mwila's case too, the signifier (coming home) eventually leads to the revelation of the signified (her expulsion) which turns out to be a signifier of other signifiers (rumours). These observations indicate that the logocentric assumption of a centre of meaning or transcendental signified is flawed because the linear chronology which desires an origin or end in relation to meaning is itself marred by atemporal moment of differànce. Hence, the image in the novel cannot be trusted to be a linear continuation from oral narratives, at the same time the oral narrative image cannot be trusted to be an absolute signified because the order of signification is that it is extended indefinitely.

3.1.2.3 Letters and Differànce

Furthermore, the use of epistolary forms, such as letters in the novel, destabilises the sign's chronological path from oral narratives to the novel because of their tendency to postpone instantaneous communication. The absolute meaning of a letter –what the writer intended it to mean is always deferred to a later time and subject to a recipient's interpretation, thus leaving emptiness or absent presence in its path. The transfer of the responsibility to supply meaning from the writer to the receipient of the letter represents the deference of communication and an escape from the temporal confines of immediate communication and chronology. One witnesses something akin to the observation about letters in *Hamlet* (1992) which do not always perform their 'telling', 'telos' or 'logos' function when they should. Instead the verb 'tell':

> … return [s] and proliferate[s], in various forms of posting and postponement. Hamlet vicariously explains, in his letter to Horatio (mostly a letter about more letters), that he has 'much to tell thee'. Hamlet's letter to Horatio…deconstructs itself into a rambling series of permutational, variational letters. (Garnier, 2003, p.68)

In this case, the letter, which simply promises a message but gives none, or gives instructions of letters to be delivered to the king, is empty of meaning or telling. It acts as a conduit of deference which first starts with the writer (Hamlet) and postpones the revelation of the message to both Horatio and the King to a later time. A similar chain of empty signifiers is depicted in *Changing Shadows* (2014) in the letter Mwila's family receives about her brother Kasongo's mental breakdown. Although Mwila's father receives the letter, which contains the message first, he cannot read (Musenge, 2014, p.21). Therefore, revelation of the information in the father's hands is delayed until Mwila returns from the river and reads the letter. Yet even at this point, the full details of the mental breakdown are deferred to a time when the writer of the letter, Matthew Phiri, meets with Mwila years later and reveals the full details. As noted in the previous section, Matthew's is not the full story because it does not include the victim's (Kasongo's) version of the story. This indicates that at every point that the letter is pronounced, it is void of the intended or desired signified from the writer and thus not its referential equal. The empty signifier chains cannot be trusted as a chronological or linear following from the signified, in this case oral narratives, because emptiness cannot represent presence of any sort. Hence, the postponement and failure for immediate and full revelation of the message in the letter demonstrates the difficulty one might face in tracing a linear and chronological succession from oral narratives to the novel.

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Notably, the idea of chains of empty signifiers associated with letters introduces the play of alterity. This introduction means that the oral narrative images cannot necessarily be an ancestry match to images in the novel. This is inferred from the observation that the period between the writing of a letter and revelation or receipt of the letter exposes the letter to communicating messages which are never intended in the first place. At this point we would not be dealing with the intended message or intended chronology but its 'other' which is inherent in the other possibilities. These other possibilities or speculations that become articulated (absent presence) in the midst of emptiness or absence of the intended signified or the message may disrupt and infiltrate the purity of the signified before it arrives and result in the institution and touch of otherness or alterity. This institutes Derrida's (1978, p.367) differànce, which includes the play of differences in which: "Play is the disruption of presence. The presence of an element is always a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a system of differences and the movement of a chain." That is, the different speculations are simply a result of the absence of the signified and never the sign but simply representations of the signified – chains of different signifiers of the signified. Such chains are evident in the case in *Changing Shadows* (2014) where Mwila, the head girl at a Catholic boarding school, gets into trouble over a love letter found in her drawer by the head teacher during inspection and is eventually expelled. The fact that Mwila has no knowledge of the contents of the letter, which was addressed to her but left in the drawer in her absence, opens up the letter to alternative meaning and the play of differences and speculation from Mwila. In addition, the head teacher, Sister Theresa, confiscates the letter and reprimands her before the contents of the letter are made known to her the following Monday. In the meantime all that Mwila can do as she awaits revelation of the letter's contents is to initiate the play of speculations over the content of the letter: "For Mwila the weekend was filled with uncertainties. She was apprehensive about the contents of the letter and indeed the consequences of the Monday meeting" (Musenge, 2014, p.11). Mwila substitutes the emptiness with meanings 'other' than those signified by the letter. Thus, her weekend is marked by a cycle of different speculations which soon give way to other speculations and possible meanings and soon relegates to absence again. Therefore, alternative chains of different signifiers or representatives of a signified can never be a linear continuation or pure signifier of an absolute signified or origin of meaning. In addition, images in the novel will always carry traces of the 'otherness' or alterity, while they carry traces of the oral narrative images by

the very fact that it initiates the cycle of signification, thus making the novel's images different from and not a linear continuation from oral narratives.

Letters in the novel further demonstrate how delayed communication disrupts the linear and temporal chronology from oral narratives to the novel by exiling temporal distinctions usually associated with the sign. Signs are often designated different epochs and their presence in another space or period is considered movement to this space from another. That is being cognisant of the logocentric (Derrida, 1974) view that the written sign in the novel is subsequent to the oral narrative image which it signifies. This is based on the premise that orality and in this case oral narratives are closer in proximity to natural language and the centre of meaning than the written novel or writing. On the contrary, the epistolary form in the novel demonstrates that the before and after or signifier/signified temporal dichotomy is broken by the fact that the sign or specifically the signifier always carries traces of the deferred signified whose absence it is forever mediating, trying to match up to or waiting for. In other words, the sign in the novel always carries traces of the intended message, the speculated or mediated message and the interpretation of the letter by the receiver –three temporal moments at once.

The above noted view can be illustrated using Langlois (2015) conclusions over Blanchot's protagonist who is sentenced to death by firing squad in *Instant of my death* (2000). The protagonist is already psychologically dead when he stands before the squad and all he awaits is the physical death which will come when he is shot. However, when he is saved at the last minute, the actual death, which was defered into the moment when the firing squad would fire, loses its presence. The result, " …what is achieved, rather, is an unpredictable and immeasurable discombobulation of the present that ordinarily recedes into the past as it is ordinarily overtaken by the imminent anarchy of the future" (Langlois, 2015, p.31) – an indefinite chain of signifiers and signifieds in which time has been exiled and is no longer of the essence. This is mirrored in the coming together of the past, present and the future in Mwila as she muses over an absent future –the punishment which comes on Monday: In its twelve years of existence, Kalonga girls' Secondary had not expelled a head girl (Musenge, 2014, p.11). Mwila has already sentenced herself to punishment even before the actual punishment comes. At that moment the past, present and the future function as one and temporal distinctions mean nothing. Yet this present-future soon becomes past when , **"She reassured herself of her innocence and thought that everything would**

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be alright" (p.11). What we have is a an emptyfuture presence that moves into the past but opens up for a present empty of meaning and relying on the future for meaning. Yet, when the suspended signified or message is finally revealed, as in Mwila's case with the love letter above, it also carries traces of the signifiers, mediators and proxies (Mwila's speculation over the content of the letter). This reveals the reality that different epochs are capable of co-existing in a single temporal moment. Hence, orality and other aspects in the novel must be viewed as different elements working together without temporal distinctions and not linearity from oral narratives to the novel.

The fact that the letter offers no revelation of the intended message or signified when it reaches its destination means that the signified, in this case oral narratives, cannot be considered an ultimate ancestor of the novel's images. This is because what is supposed to be a centre of meaning (as we observed with non-diachronic signs) is no longer a centre but an opening to an 'other' time. At the same time, it is an opening to the multiplicity of the sign and an infinite number of signifiers. In other words:

> the centre had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but…non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions come into play. This was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when in the absence of a center of origin, everything becomes discourse. (Derrida, 1978, p.353)

The above mentioned play of signs is synonymous with differànce because it occupies the place where the centre of meaning would naturally be if it were present within the sign. This play is evident in the issue concerning the revelation associated with the letter that leads to Mwila's expulsion in *Changing Shadows* (2014). When Monday finally comes, we discover that the 'future' or revelation of the letter that had been deferred or delayed the whole weekend does not offer any closure concerning the signified. It is clear from the conversation that takes place in the head teacher's office that there are two interpretations of the letter. For Sister Theresa, the obvious implication of the letter is expulsion but for Mwila it is a clear case of mistaken identity seeing that the love letter was a one sided correspondence from a boy she has never interacted with. The two interpretations demonstrate how the desired signified becomes a conduit for not only further deferment but also multiplication of the sign. It is possible to conclude that in the same way as the trope of the letter has demonstrated, oral narratives, as a signified, represent the opening up of many possible signifiers. The narratives also become signifiers that join the multiplication and

infinite chain of signifiers. Therefore, they can never be an absolute signified to which images in the novel are said to emerge.

3.3 *The Chosen Bud*

The novel is set in the early years of Zambia's independence, in Malenga village located in the Eastern Province, and describes the story of the mystery of a young woman, Leira, and her son. The two start appearing to the living after their death and burial. The narrative is characterised by a series of flashbacks from Leira's grandfather, parents and husband that enable the retracing of the events leading to Leira's death in the hope of finding out the reason behind what the people in her village interpret as protest for unfair death. We learn, through the flashback of one of the village elders Sicholo, that the death might have been caused by their son, honourable Kalimbambo, who the family has allowed to stray. Kalimbambo left his first wife and went on to marry a modern city girl. He also destested, abandoned and chased any relatives who visited his home in the city. In time it is revealed that the government minister, Kalimbambo, is indeed responsible for Leira and her son's death following instructions from a witch doctor to offer the most loved family member as a sacrifice to win an election and stay in government.

3.3.1 Deconstructing Signs in the Novel that are the 'Same' but not 'Identical' to Oral Narrative Images

This section considers the dominant discourse that the novel's images follow oral narrative images as mere replications and signifiers of oral narrative images. The argument guiding the analysis is that the images are the same but not identical and thus nullified. In other words, although two signs may carry traces of each other, the differences resulting from differànce –specifically deference, are enough to warrant difference. That is, if we take differànce to mean

> The sense of not being identical, of being other, of being discernable, etc and in 'differents', whether referring to the alterity of dissimilarity or the austerity of allergy or of polemics, it is necessary that interval, distance, spacing occurs among the different elements and occur actively, dynamically and with a certain perseverance in repetition. (Derrida, 2004, p.284)

Derrida, as noted above, underscores the fact that different signifiers carry discernable traces of the potential signified. As a result, this links the signifiers together in a relationship that makes them 'the same but not identical' (Derrida, 2004), considering that they also comprise of 'otherness'. *The Chosen Bud* (1991), comprises of different versions of a story about a dead young

woman, Leira, and her child, who both start appearing to the living in protest over their unjust ritual killing. The supposition is that the versions evidence how this kind of differ*ance* is realised in signs that double in multiplication and repetition. The task is to establish whether a sign, which splits as it is deferred, supplements or adds something to its double in repetition, can be considered identical or a linear continuation from oral narratives. Hence, as soon as oral narrative images leave the sphere of orality and enter the novel they do not do so as simple replications of the oral narrative version but as multiples of the original image.

3.3.1.1 Doubled, Split, Dispersed and Multiplied Signs

The chronology and signifier/signified relationship between oral narratives and the novel is broken by the fact that a specific concept in the novel may not necessarily correspond to a specific signifier but rather different signifiers. This is taking into consideration the logocentric (Derrida, 1974) thesis that the concept or signified must correspond to a specific presence or signifier in the real world. I invalidate this with the view that various realisations of the same signified are not always identical because the potential signified which, is abstract and void of structural form, opens up the concept to limitless play. According to Derrida (1978), such play destabilises the fixed relationship between signifier and signified by bringing to the fore discrepancies and other presences usually ignored when focus remains on the abstract structure of the signified. The order of differ*ance* between the variants of the same signified is that they both bear traces of the same concept or signified. That is, "…the order of the same…Yet there must be a common, although entirely different [differ-ante\ root) within the sphere that relates the two movements of differing to one another." Hence, although all the different instances of the signified (the root concept/sign) may be considered signifiers of the sign, the fact that they are different realisations of the sign (signified) brings to question the signifier/signified (novel's image and oral narrative image) relationship. Parallels can be drawn with the concept of 'wife' in relation to Kalimbambo's (the cousin to Leira responsible for her death) first and second wives, Esneya and Daisy, in *The Chosen Bud* (1991) who are designated the same title of 'wife' but do not have identical traits. Esineya the first wife knows the ways and traditions of her community (Malenga village) and always welcomes her husband's relatives at her home in the city before she is divorced. Daisy, the second wife, is depicted as a modern city lady who speaks English and refuses to eat and sleep at the village when she visits for fear of getting sick besides being unwelcoming to her husband's relatives. The difference between both wives is significant because it reveals how two signifiers

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can refer to the same signified without necessarily being characteristically identical. It also means that oral narrative images, as a potential signified can never have the exact same replications in the novel simply because the conceptual root is the same. Hence, the dispersal of the signified into many possible non-identical signifiers breaks the novel's images from a straight-line continuation from oral narratives.

In addition, oral narratives can never be the centre of originality or meaning for their variants in novels that intentionally or unintentionally make use of oral narrative forms because the sign's meaning will always carry traces or residues of its spatial relations to other signs. The whole concept of differànce is centred on the temporal-spatial movements of the sign. That is, as the sign moves through time, it bears signs of not only preceding and subsequent signs but also the signs that surround it at various moments in its movement. As Martin (1995, p.42) postulates, one of the symptoms of differànce is that the "center is always susceptible to being swept away by the currents that surround it, and presence is by those same movements always deferred." The meaning here is that the ability to remain identical is influenced by surrounding signs and when this happens, the deferment of the sign is made possible because the interaction alters the signifier, obstructs revelation of the true signified and moves along the process of deferment. This is evident in the way the concept of wife in the previous paragraph is affected by context. Sicholo, Leira and Kalimbambo's grandfather, compare Esineya and Daisy based on the village's expected characteristics of a wife. The comparison, however, favours Esineya at the expense of Daisy. This is because as expected by Kalimbambo's relatives, Esineya brings the children to visit the village and eats, sleeps and interacts comfortably with them as expected. On the contrary, Daisy refuses to eat or sleep in the village on the premise that the food and water will make her sick, and she can be bitten by bugs, that is besides her being dressed in a way that is not acceptable for a married woman in the village. Yet, one realises that perhaps in another setting some of Daisy's behaviour is representative of a good wife as observed in the fact that Kalimbambo mentions that she was the envy of the city because of the same latest fashion that brings her scorn in the village (Luangala, 1991, p.245). However, the changing spatial relations compel us not to take for granted the universality of meanings associated and sometimes forced on signs as observed by the unpredictable images of Kalimbambo's wives which is based on context and perspective. Therefore, signs must never be considered stable and static because they always carry traces of the

signs they relate with on both the temporal and spatial dimension. Hence, while oral narratives may sometimes influence the novel's images, they are not the structure of originality or ancestry owing to the subjectivity and spatial dynamics highlighted above.

The effect of context on the replication of the sign can be explained further using supplementation, which adds or subtracts something to a sign and annuls the possibility of linear continuation from oral narratives to the novel. Context and supplementation work hand in hand to introduce 'otherness' and further defer revelation of a desired signified. This is because different contexts and spatial relations add or subtract something at the point of enunciation of the sign, which alters the sign and turn it into a non-signifier or non-presence of the signified. That is:

> The supplement supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself in-the-place-of, if it fills, it is as if one fills a void. If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence, it produces no relief, its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness. (Derrida, 1974, p.45)

This citation explicates the idea that when context changes, the image or sign loses the full presence of the previous context because the new context adds its own presence to the sign. Hence, the supplement's role is to fill in for the signifier when there is a lack, which is in this case demanded by a change in context. Yet, a shift in the context makes the sign unreliable and incapable of identical resemblance to the signified because the sign can easily be altered. This can be noted in the ease with which the people of Leira's home, *Malenga* village, in *The Chosen Bud* (1991, p.142) alter one English proverb to suit their non-English context. That is, Kalimbambo tells us how the villagers have altered the English proverb: 'the taste of the pudding is in the eating', to 'only the nostril could tell the real snuff.'" The significance here is that although the concept is the same, the villagers substitute pudding with snuff, which is more appropriate to a society in which many old people take snuff. However, because it is not identical to the original signifier (even with the same signified concept) "One cannot determine the center, which supplements it, taking the center's place in its absence –this sign is added, occurs as a surplus of a supplement" (Derrida, 1978, p.365). The new version acts as a supplement for the lack of a centre of meaning or signified created by the fact that the English version cannot be present in this different contextual and cultural space. The surplus or supplement substituted for the English proverb and its consequent fluidity suggests that the sign cannot be trusted to remain identical or

have a static meaning in different contexts. Hence, there is no telling what effect other signs in the novel may have on an image from oral narratives or consequently what lack will need a supplement. One must then seriously consider the role of supplementation and fluidity of the sign and not take for granted the view of linear continuation and the fixed signifier/signified relationship between oral narratives and the novel.

The additive nature of supplementation leads to my proposition that images or signs in the novel are characterised by doubling and redoubling, which subverts the idea that images in the novel are merely replications of oral narrative images. The implication here is of a supplementation that goes beyond the earlier view of multiplication of the sign as it is deferred albeit in a single linear chain of supplements. What I suggest here is supplementation in which the sign multiplies in an off tangent manner by doubling and then splitting the double. That is: "There is no longer a simple origin for what is reflected is split in itself and not only an addition to itself of its image. The reflection, the image, the double, splits what it double" (Derrida, 1974, p.36) and defers meaningful communication and revelation of the sign indefinitely. We are no longer dealing with a single path of deferment but several limitless paths of deferment such that it may be difficult to determine the origin, for such deferment has no limit. We observe such deferànce or play of signs in the metaphor used by Luponda's grandmother in the *Chosen Bud* (1991) when she first approaches Nthambiko's family for Leira's hand in marriage. She does not immediately state her case but instead uses the metaphor of a goat which "has caught the sweet smell of such a nubile nanny goat and he had heard her feminine bleating" (Luangala, 1991, p.200). First, we witness how the desired signified or marriage proposal is doubled in the goat metaphor as a signifier, deferrer and deferent at the same time. Yet, the metaphor does not offer any signified meaning but splits into connotative and denotative meaning. If one takes the connotative path, they discover that this path offers no immediate meaning. This is evidenced by the fact that at first not even the members of the receiving family catch on what Luponda's grandmother is hinting at, and even when they finally do, Nthambiko's family do not give an immediate answer to complete the proposal. This demonstrates that while the goat metaphor is supposed to signify the same conceptual root as the marriage proposal, they are not identical because the metaphor splits itself into different directions and disperses deferment into various directions. As a result, a sign, which is capable of doubling, redoubling and splitting itself flaws the idea of the transfer of signs from

oral narratives to the novel in linear succession. This makes the sign different from anything that is assumed to be its identical.

3.3.1.2 Obliteration of a 'Signified 's' Referential Power

Furthermore, the idea of non-identical signifiers that signify the same 'signified', takes away the referential power of language and by extension the referential power of oral narratives on the novel. This is because the order of deferànce and supplementation is such that it creates alternate signifiers that carry traces of each other as they defer meaning. Any differences that may exist among the signifiers is dismantled by the traces of each other that they carry –this sameness, which is not identical. Such a decentring of absolute meaning or the signified is reflected in Satan's mission in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1975). Satan's aim in the Garden of Eden is to decentre and challenge God's place as the centre of power. Martin (1995) draws a parallel between this mission and Satan's rhetorical language, which is decentred through the breaking of contraries or binaries and consequently takes away the referential power of language and opens up language to the play of signs. Martin's (1995, p.44) research demonstrates this play with phrases used by Satan such as: "To destroy pleasure is pleasure; she is love, there is terror in love…" This paradoxical language takes away transcendental meaning from the signified or the centre of meaning in the sense that if pleasure is opened up to mean destroy other than its usual reference, then language takes away the power that central meaning outside of itself has and allow language to play in its own power. This removal of transcendental meaning from the signified is exactly witnessed in *The Chosen Bud* (1991) where the referential power of family as a signified is broken by Kalimbambo's betrayal. Kalimbambo sacrifices his cousin Leira in order to win an election and in so doing he breaks down the harmony and unity in his family.

Clearly Leira's death and her appearance to the living, as old Sicholo notes, could only be because the family had allowed one of their sons Kalimbambo to go astray (Luangala, 1991). The family, which had once signified peace and unity has now been infiltrated by betrayal and greed. Hence, as with Satan's rhetoric in *Paradise Lost* (1975) "Even as he articulates differences he uses sameness. As he articulates sameness, he speaks contradiction" (Martin, 1995, p.44). Kalimbambo articulates a different version of family which is characterised by his murderous transgression. Although he is still acting as a 'family' member, his act contradicts his family's expectations, which include love and unity. The referential power of family as signified had been challenged

and opened up to play by these two realisations of the concept which are only the same because of their referential relationship to the concept of family but not identical. In the same way if oral narratives are considered to be transcendental signifieds or centres of meaning and hence origins or predecessors of the novel's signs, this is nullified by the presence of many different traces which are the same but definitely not identical to their predecessors.

3.2.1.3 Repetition and Differànce

I propose that repetition in the novel does not necessarily entail mere replication of oral narrative images but a more complex and rigorous activity of deferment and differànce. Repetition is a common mnemonic technique used in oral narratives and when it is used in the novel, it is considered as evidence of not only the technique but also the transfer of actual oral narrative images. On the contrary, the transfer and use of the technique in the novel is such that the signs are characterised by deferment and therefore not identical to their oral narrative counterparts. This section discusses how repetition is characterised by emptiness, cancellation of the absolute signified which results in perpetual deferment and non-revelation of the sign because the meaning of the sign or its signified is always outside the sign, in this case outside the text, despite the signifiers being considered repetitions of the same. Therefore, any search for meaning must focus on the differences between different signifiers or deferrents and never on a signified which does not exist within the sign or in the novel for that matter. In this way, one can argue that repetitions in the novel cannot be considered linear descendants or representatives of their oral narrative counterparts.

Repetition demonstrates how images in the novel can never be absolute signifiers because they are empty of meaning and incapable of replicating any images such as the oral narrative images they are purported to represent and repeat. The repeated sign is never the sign itself because, it is a repetition or representative that simply carries traces of the signified or past presence, deferring and postponing revelation of the true signified. As Vaughn (1990, p.30) notes, "It depicts a present situation in which the past is so thoroughly present, in which the past so completely reconstitutes and reinterprets present experience, that the lines between past, present, the present's reconstitution of the past, and the past's reinterpretation of the present are erased." That is, the past brings something to the present, but the fact that the present also brings its own interpretation releases the repeated sign from any authoritative hold of the signified. At the same time, the reality that the

present is influenced by the past means that the repeated image in the novel is empty of autonomous meaning or any reference to the signified. For instance, the various versions of the events leading to Leira's actual death presented by characters in *The Chosen Bud* (1991) suffer from similar non-identity and emptiness despite being signifiers and repetitions of the signified – the actual death. Although the versions carry traces of the original event, they are also influenced by the present moments of telling by different characters in the novel. For instance, Chinsamba's version of the events leading up to Leira's death is from the perspective of a father mourning his child and includes events such as his marriage to Leira's mother Nanzama, Leira's birth and eventual death which they do not witness first hand. This is different from Leira's husband Luponda's version that does not include her childhood but is centred on preparation for their marriage and their short journey in marriage including his first hand information of her death for which he is present. Hence, although the two narrations are repetitions of the same event, they are empty of true meaning as they move further and further in proximity from the original story, which has already taken place by the time of narration. It is clear that the moment the play of signs, as is the case with the different versions of Leira's story above, moves on to the next moment of telling, it introduces another dimension of the sign and we can no longer claim to be dealing with a replication or a sign that is identical to its predecessor. In addition, it is clear that, when oral narrative images are repeated in the novel, the two moments work together in such a way that the repetition can no longer be identified with the signified or any other sign before or after it. The novel's version of the sign then simply represents a distinctive moment or moments, which cannot be considered a linear succession or identical replication from oral narratives.

Furthermore, repetition crosses out the idea of a pristine signified or centre of meaning because what acts as a telling is never an autonomous telling but a re-telling of something that may not be an original signified. The idea of the primary or original is obliterated by the fact that the repetition, which we assume is an autonomous sign in the novel, is never a first telling but a re-telling of an external central signified somewhere. This indicates that the image in the novel cannot be trusted as a pure intra or extra diegetic referent of another entity at any point in the novel because:

> if repetition functions both to tum A into non-A and to reveal A as non A, and if even the "first" time a thing occurs it is a repetition of something that preceded it, of something that will follow it, and of its opposite whose trace is contained in it, how then do we read and interpret "first" and

repeated occurrences in literature? What is a beginning if it is also non-beginning? (Vaughn, 1990, p.27)

From the above, it becomes clear that when we observe a sign for the first time in a novel (as would be the case if an oral narrative image appeared in the novel), the sign may be a repetition from a source outside the text. Although this image is repeated, the meaning it generates inside the novel and the character it takes up is born from mingling with other signs or images in the novel. This also means the sign cannot be considered to have autonomous presence of either the repeated sign or its own independent presence. Therefore, what we consider as a repetition, introduces otherness such that even when it is a first appearance it carries traces of something that came before it and cannot be the beginning too. This lack of original or repeated presence in the sign is evident in *The Chosen bud* (1991) in the narration of the tragic death upon which the story is based. The death and events leading to Leira's death, the dead girl who is now appearing to the living, is told and repeated from the perspectives of different characters. We observe that the very first version of the story, which includes Leira's childhood up to her death and is told from the perspective of Chinsamba (Leira's father), lacks the specific details of her death because he did not specifically witness her death. In addition, the narration is an iteration of an event that took place before the narrative. There are other versions in the narrative, such as Sicholo's, which is more concerned with musings over why Leira is appearing to the living than the death itself. Then there is Nanzama's version, which is a flashback of her marriage and difficulty to conceive Leira including a mother's perspective of Leira's childhood, marriage and eventual death. There is also Luponda's vision, which describes both details of his marriage to Leira and those of her death because he was in bed with her when she died. These other versions of Leira's death which follow Chinsamba's confirm that the first version carries traces of future repetitions (Luangala, 1991). It must be noted that what we consider as the first narration of the story (Chinsamba's flashback) is simply a reconstruction of a story that is not present and did not take place in the narrative. As shown in the relationship between Chinsamba's narration and the other versions of Leira's death, if this first narration is not the original but simply a representative of the real story then it relegates itself into detour and deferment of the signified event. If this is the case, then the actual events of Leira's death, as a signified of a non-presence, loses its function of original signified or absolute signified for it corresponds to an empty signifier. At this stage, both the actual events as signified and the

different versions of the story as signifiers cannot be considered an absolute or fixed pair. This suggests that through alteration and relegation to non-presence repeated versions of oral narrative images in the novel break themselves away from identical resemblance and reference to a transcendental or pristine signified.

 The fact that the actual 'signified' or oral narrative image is never part of the novel's narrative prevents the full unravelling and revelation of repeated versions or representations of the sign in the novel. In cases where the sign is repeated more than once, the repeated sign or signifier simply becomes a facilitator of the back and forward movements of detours and substitutions of meaning without providing any meaning by the end of the novel. As Hamelman (2000, p.318) observes of repeated signs: "words lead back to countless other words, unveiling an infinite chain of polysemous signification, then no deconstruction is ever, can ever be, complete". So, a signifier is always a deferred version of another signifier and at the same time different from the other but this chain of signification may include the assumed signified. This applies to *The Chosen Bud* (1991) in which the story of Leira's death is told through different flashbacks from four different characters –Chinsamba, Sicholo, Nanzama and Luponda. These anachronisms do not only disrupt the linear flow of the narrative but also defer full and first hand revelation of the signified. Further, the different versions of Leira's death are empty in meaning and cannot be relied on to offer the full and original story of Leira's death because they are not the story but different repeated perspectives of the story. In much the same way, repetitions in the novel, including those transferred from oral narratives, are simply representatives of the signified or conduits for deferment but not identical signifiers or linear referents of oral narrative images.

In the final analysis, if any reference to meaning is to be found in repetitions, it must be sought in the play among the different signifiers or repetitions and not in any absolute signified outside of the novel such as the oral narrative. This is because, as demonstrated above, the signifier in the novel is never identical to a pristine origin it is purported to repeat but comprises of emptiness that is perpetually deferred through different representatives or shadows of the signified. Vaughn (1990, p.31) is succinct in observing how In *Sound and the Fury* (1954), Faulkner:

> …explores the relationship between signified and signifier, illustrating through the four versions of the story that the sign must be understood through the differences and deferrals between the various signifiers. The plot is not motivated by a desire for the end, and the meaning is not revealed

in the end. The meaning is "unmasterable," revealing what it does reveal of itself not even in the movement between endings, but rather in the movement between plots. The "real" story is nowhere in the text, but in the play between its texts.

This play of different signifiers resulting from the absence of the signified within the sign is the core argument of differànce and this play of differences is infinite because the signified is always outside the sign. It is for this reason that any details about Leira and her death that we get in *The Chosen Bud* (1991) are from all the different flashbacks or repetitions of the story. We are never introduced to the actual events because they are never part of the narrative, which is told after the events occurred. So, we have no choice but to consider the story that the repetitions tell considering that they might not be pure representatives of the true signified. So up to the end of *The Chosen Bud* (1991) the details of Leira's death that we gather from the different versions and perspectives such as those by Chinsamba, Sicholo, Nanzama and Luponda offer us hope that the actual story or events they signify (a signified) exists somewhere outside the text but it never appears anywhere in the text. This absence of the actual story as a signified in the text defers the play of different versions and repetitions indefinitely. Therefore, if the signified story of Leira's death is nowhere in the novel and every repetition has no primary meaning in itself, then there is need to open up meaning to the play of signs and not restrict it to signifier/signified terms. That is, the image in the novel, especially as a repetition of an oral narrative counterpart, is a different version of something outside the novel –oral narratives. This is because the meaning of the sign must be sought in the differences present in the novel, from the meaning it gets from other signs in the novel and not outside the novel.

3.3.2 Translation and Linear Ancestry from Oral Narratives
In this part, I argue that translation facilitates the play of differànce and as such translation from indigenous languages to the English context of the novel in English cannot be a determinant of whether a novel is a linear representative of oral narratives or not. The common view held by various post-colonial practitioners in both theory and practice has been that when proverbs, words, phrases and especially songs are translated from the indigenous tongue or left untranslated in the novel it is a sign of continuation, preservation and influence from indigenous oral narratives. In reality, the untranslated and translated sign in the new context of the novel neither represents the indigenous language nor the new context. Ashcroft et al., (2004, pp.63-64) observe that the

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interpretation of the sign requires interaction with the indigenous language and culture which is not present in the text. I suggest that our acceptance of this reality:

> depends on an awareness of difference that does not reduce the other to identity, but allows for a mediation between "my tongue" and "the other's." Rather than defining translation as the transfer of identical meaning from one language to another, or even from "me" to "you" in the same language, Derrida emphasizes a necessary displacement of meaning. In this way translation becomes an exemplary metaphor for the self-differing and self-deferring movement of writing that Derrida calls differànce. (Prins, 1991, p.436)

Therefore, as I have already demonstrated in other parts of this work, once images move along the chain of signification, they are empty of their predecessor's presence and join the chain of supplements and deferents. This is because the presence of either translated or untranslated signs in the novel is such that they require the previous context in order to get the semblance of any sort of present autonomous presence of the sign in the novel. Such movement, which represents non-identity, should not be considered as undermining any predecessor or future presence because it is always empty in meaning. Our discussion on the relationship between this kind of differànce and translation is assisted by the translated and untranslated songs prevalent in *The Chosen Bud* (1991). The intention is to determine whether translation demonstrates linear continuation from oral narratives to the novel.

To begin with, texts such as songs that one translates into English from indigenous languages and includes in the novel represent emptiness and differànce because they represent an indigenous language version or signified that is not present in the novel. Although the language would be different, the fact that the sign has moved along in the chain of signification means that it enters different temporal and spatial interactions, which make the sign empty of the signified's presence. A better way to understand this is by analysing the courtship between two Victorian poets, Elizabeth Barett and Robert Browning who are purported to have courted using letters they wrote to each other using translations of the Greek *Prometheus Bound*. Prins' (1991, p.445) study of the letters as a form of differànce observes (in similar character to the relationship between orality and the novel) that when either of the two wrote their letters, it is "in the absence of the other, in order to make the other present, but the writing process also defers that presence." The desire of each writer was to replicate the Greek in their English translation but since the Greek version was always

absent during the letter writing, it introduced absence or emptiness and the letters became deferents of the signified. Each time either letter reached its destination, the language used was difficult to decode and twice removed from the original signified, *Prometheus Bound*, and empty of the Greek meaning, which was intended in the first place. A similar institution of empty meaning is evidenced in a song Nanzama remembers her grandmother using to teach her that husbands would always wonder away from the marital bed but that should not cause worry because they would never leave their wives. Single ladies urging married women not to hold tightly to their husbands usually sang the song at funerals. Below are four lines from the song which is a direct translation from indigenous *Nsenga* to English in *The Chosen Bud* (1991, p.114):[4]

> We should share the men,
>
> When they die we all mourn,
>
> Why should others monopolise men,
>
> All of us we are beggars…

In the absence of the signified (both the original song and the context), the meaning of the song is empty. This demonstrates how the translated song is not an autonomous signifier of its indigenous predecessor. At this point the song's *Nsenga* meaning is lost and because it is an attempt to keep the original version, it cannot be considered an English song. Hence, in a similar way to Browning and Barett's communication using translations from Greek, the song represents neither Nsenga nor English presence. The meaning of the song lies in the liminal space between the two languages and as such is a reflection of Derridan (1974) differànce or play of different signifiers. This confirms that translating texts from oral narratives to the novel introduces alteration, liminality, deference of meaning and is not evidence of their linear continuation or replication from oral narratives to the novel.

Furthermore, the idea of empty presence includes cases where an untranslated and verbatim indigenous version of a proverb, song or other is present in the novel. As discussed in Chapter One, the presence of untranslated items in post-colonial novels is considered a rejection of the metropolitan holds on communication and emphasis or embodiment of some pure and original indigenous signified (Musila, 2008). Yet, the fact that this indigenous language is foreign to the medium of expression in the novel in English and the reality that it is removed from the context of indigenous language makes it empty of meaning. This is because without the original language

and context to provide 'presence' the sign has no source of presence in the new context and in this way emptiness or absence of presence is established. Reference to the letters between Barett and Browning once again demonstrates that the letters were not only translations from Greek but twice removed and empty of the Greek presence because the absence of the Greek version means that it can never be fully articulated in their letters (Prins, 1991, p.438). The above reveals that even when both audience and writer are familiar with the indigenous language in question, the language can never be voiced, fully present or understood in a foreign English context. So it becomes difficult to read such a text because the language is foreign and hence empty in the new context. One can clearly observe this in some of the songs in *The Chosen Bud* (1991, p.245) which are presented in bilingual mode with the indigenous and English version side by side. Of specific note is the song that Kalimbambo sings on his way to the village to collect soil from Leira and her son's grave and realises that after this obstacle, success in the election is assured:

Uzipita-pita-pita- bwino	Go through my throat
	Peacefully;
Ukazipita kodi	When going
Umasiya wa bulala m'zakoo?	Do you leave you have harmed your friend?

Contrary to the belief that the presence of the indigenous language version gives the untranslated version 'higher status' as stipulated by Ashcroft et al (2004, p.65), the danger in this is that although the indigenous version is present, one concentrates on the English version whose language is synchronic with the language of the novel. There is a way in which the spatial interactions of this song can no longer accommodate the presence of the indigenous song as presence but only as silence or emptiness after it has moved from its previous context. Therefore, the song as a sign no longer represents the signified indigenous song nor does it signify an English song. This suggests that oral narrative images, such as proverbs and songs, left untranslated in the novel can never signify or simply be a mere continuation from oral narratives. They belong to that open empty, 'either or' space which belongs to the play of signs and differànce.

Furthermore, when explanations and commentaries are included alongside translations as an attempt to recapture the signified presence, they simply join the category of deferents and detours and can never compensate for or demonstrate linearity from oral narratives. The explanations are deemed necessary for the provision of meaning for the indigenous sign in the new context. This,

however, demonstrates the way in which the sign excludes the signified presence or autonomous meaning, bearing in mind that both the meaning provided by the explanations and the original signified is external to the sign or version presented in the novel. This is the case with many of the songs in *The Chosen Bud* (1991) where an explanation of the context and meaning accompanies the translated and untranslated songs. This is especially so in the song referred to earlier which Chikasi uses to teach Nanzama about the behaviour of married men during her early days in marriage. The song is followed by a commentary from an extradiegitic perspective that the lesson of the song, and that whenever the song was sang: "the lesson was always driven home. Some of the women would change their behaviour and release their grips on their men. And this is what Chikasi was telling Nanzama to do, to relax her grip on her Chinsamba" (Luangala, 1991, p.115). We only understand this song and the others in the novel because they are explained, and yet the explanation would not be needed in the indigenous setting because, as we are told in the novel, everyone understands the songs (Luangala, 1991). This indicates that the song has presence of the signified in its original context but not in the novel where it is simply a deferred pseudo presence of the signified. Therefore, the presence of explanations or commentaries alongside translations in the novel does not represent linearity from oral narratives to the novel because the songs represent deference or detours and not the actual sign from oral narratives.

I, therefore, argue that translation in the novel demonstrates that, what binds oral narratives and the novel is not pure transcendence of images from oral narratives but mediations that fill up the empty presence or the failure of pure transcendence or revelation of the oral narrative image as an absolute signified. The desire of the dominant discourse is the inheritance of exact or pure images from oral narratives. Yet, one witnesses alternating mediations or pseudo presences meant to account for the empty presence or absence of the signified deferring that desire to obscurity**.** As is the case with Barret and Browning's letter writing (Prins, 1991), they take away the power that the Greek version of *Prometheus Bound* may have over them as a desired signified. This is because the love that they share mediates and glosses all the challenges they have in understanding each other's letters and attempt at writing using Greek in an English context. That is: "they solve the problem of power by re-allocating it between themselves and calling it love" (Prins, 1991, p.445). The suggestion is that the differences one observes in translation from indigenous languages to the novel must be viewed as mediations between two different contexts and moments of signification.

The mediations are an attempt to fill up the emptiness resulting from the absence of the signified rather than as a denial of the signified or oral narrative to represent itself. For instance, one notes the song that Chinsamba remembers singing as a member of the village dance troupe at a competition with a neighbouring village where he met his wife Nanzama. The song is presented in bilingual mode but the excerpt from the song below in *The Chosen Bud* (1991, p.15) reveals that the song is not a literal or exact translation of the indigenous song:

Song A:

>*Amalengaaaa!!!*
>*Amalenga niombeleni eee*
>*Yaaa eee!!!*
>*Chim'tali changaaaa eee!!!*

Song B:

>Mr. Mulenga.
>Mr. Mulenga Save me I beg,
>My Chim'tali.

One difference between the two versions above is characterised by the replacement of the prefix 'A' and letter 'a' in the name Malenga from the Nsenga version with the address form 'Mr' and the letter 'u' in the English version. The prefix 'A' which is usually added to names in the Nsenga tradition as a sign of respect is probably replaced with 'Mr' for lack of such an address form in the English language. In addition while the letter 'a' may be phonetically apt in the Nsenga context, it might not be the case with English context where the letter 'u' proves to be a better phonetic choice. In both cases the replacements of the prefix 'A' and the letter 'u' must be viewed as contextual mediations. Therefore, differences such as those present in the song above are not denial of the indigenous voice of the song. As such, placing the indigenous version side by side in order to include the indigenous language song as a signified is flawed because what we witness here is not a power struggle but the play of signs or differànce facilitated by the absence of the context or signified itself. Therefore oral narrative images presence in the novel ought not to be viewed as indicating a continuation or linearity because in some cases authors simply include items based on their suitability to the novel and context at hand.

In addition, translation reflects the fluidity of signs and demonstrates that the oral narrative can never be the same in the novel because of the play of supplementarity. Translations, when used in the novel, displace the original or trace of the original and demonstrate a loss of the signified in translation. The translation also adds a lack that can only be understood in the context of the enunciation of the supplement. This is because the absence of the original indigenous text as signified creates a void which would remain empty of meaning if a substitute is not available to compensate or supplement the absence of the signified. The supplement is not the thing itself but simply an addition after the death of the signified or arch-trace in Derridan (1974) terms, which may go on indefinitely as the play of signification and temporal-spatial relations change. That is:

> Beginning with an origin or a center that divides itself, an historical circle is described, which is degenerative in direction but progressive and compensatory in effect. On the circumference that circle are new origins for new circles that accelerate the degeneration by annulling the compensatory effects of the preceding circle, and thereby also making its truth and beneficence appear. (Derrida, 1974, p.202)

This means that translation may add a supplement to a pervious signifier in order to make it fit into the present space. However, in so doing it is already cancelling and altering the previous signifier –a simultaneous act of degeneration and progress. This supplementary nature is evident in a translation of the mourner's dirge in *The Chosen Bud* (1991) which is usually sang at the funeral wake comparing a person that has lost a loved one to an orphan dove. During Leira's funeral Sicholo and his wife Chikasi let their Daughter Nanzama cry over her daughter Leira and her son's death without stopping her on the premise that she was the orphan dove that mourners sang about during the wake because it would not stop crying over the loss of its mother. Of significance here is the line translated from 'koni kam'masalaaaa' to 'orphan dove' (Luangala, 1991, p.231). The word 'koni' which would literally mean bird in the indigenous language context, is translated to a more specific type of a bird, 'a dove' in the English version. The metonymy used here demonstrates how the word bird is cancelled but at the same time supplemented by the word dove in the English version. The choice of a dove and not any other bird such as the indigenous mourning bird (owl) can be related to the fact that doves, specifically the release of doves at a funeral is related to the freeing of a dead person's spirit. So, although the two songs are the same, the second version adds something to it and this moves the movement of supplementarity on because we have no idea what

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another context or point of signification may bring. It is for this reason that the oral narrative image or any other sign transferred to the novel must be viewed as something that never existed as an original signified but as an arche-trace –a supplement itself that already carries the potential to be supplemented for as long as the play of signs is not stationary.

3.3.3 The Role of the 'Deferred Voice' in Challenging Linear Continuation from Oral Narratives

Deference of voice is another way that differànce disrupts the existence of a stable meaning of the sign and nullifies the possibility of linear ascendancy from oral narratives. The fact that most narratives in the novel are told after the story itself occurred means that the narration is subsequent to the actual events of the story and the narrator is often an observer but one that did not participant in the actual events of the story. Genette (1980) sums up this view using the term 'voice' of a narrative to include the person speaking, time of narration and the person through which we are perceiving the narration. In many narratives the 'voice' is often heterodiegetic (told by someone who is external to the action), subsequent (after the actual story) and zero focalisation (told by an omniscient narrator). The relationship between the narrative and the actual events of a story lead us to assert that the voice is always an:

> … immediacy which is thought to be the prime characteristic of this voice [that] is denied: what is thought to be a presence is, in fact, an echo, the trace of an absence, forever caught in deferral. Deferral automatically posits two times, a real before and an apparent now, the former being relegated to what is done, finished, not present, and thus supplementalized and marginalized. (Jahshan, 2002, pp.78-9)

The above underscores that the narrative 'voice' is never the voice of the actual story or events and thus suggests that what we have in the novel are images that depict a time past that can never be a presence of any kind. This is the case in *The Chosen Bud* (1991) in which the novel opens with the story of a murder that has already taken place with the author using flashbacks from her grandparents, parents and her widower to enable us to witness the retracing of an event that is already in the past. The retracing is not the real thing and we notice traces from the different people that narrate the events leading to Leira's death and subsequent appearance to the living. This is because the story's versions are from different perspectives. For example, Luponda's is from the perspective of a husband and Nanzama from the perspective of a mother yet they both contain information of Leira's death and her appearance to the living. This is similar to Jashan's (2002,

p.79) observation over Edgar Allan Poe's *Murders in the Rue Morgue* which he suggests is a "narrative of a murder already committed, already an absence, contains not one but two stories, that of the murder and that of the investigation". Therefore, the narrative version of Leira's death is not only the trace of the story but a redoubling as we observe the first time it is narrated by Chinsamba and a split in the trace that we observe in the presence of the other multiple narrations. This sign, which is but a trace that splits and redoubles in the absence of the signified, cannot be a complete signifier of anything including oral narrative descendency.

Furthermore, the relays or detours observed in the deference of voice divert the oral narrative mnemonic to that which does not reflect the oral mnemonic method of patterns and episodes and linear plots. It is often assumed that mnemonic patterns, such as episodic and linear narrations, are a common memory aid in oral narratives. It is similarly assumed that the presence of the same patterns in novels is a sign of linear continuation from oral narratives. Yet, this is not the case in many novels where an order of this kind is disrupted by the use of anachronies such as flashbacks and flash-forwards which are not particularly possible in an oral narration. So instead of having a single narration of the actual events covering Leira's death and subsequent appearance to the living in the *Chosen Bud* (1991), what we have are flashbacks from Chinsamba, Sicholo, Nanzama and Luponda acting as detours and facilitators of deferment of the voice of the actual events that happened before the narration of the story. Furthermore, all the flashbacks are empty of the presence of the original story as a signified. The disturbance of chronology of the story's events also applies to the fact that the narration begins with a flash-forward in which Leira is appearing to the living and then moves to flashbacks which trace the narration from its beginning or beginnings (since every narrative perspective has their version). The series of flashbacks defer both the story not present in the narrative and the revelation of the mystery of Leira's appearance to the living. Such back and forth movement of the plot and disruption of the order of the story, which results in deference of the signified, is not reflective of oral narrative mnemonics involving episodes and linear plots. Furthermore, the institution of deferànce demonstrates how the novel's signs are involved in the play of different signifiers as they facilitate deference of signifieds that only exist outside of this play. Hence, such signs cannot be considered descendants of a stable oral narrative signified existing outside the sign itself.

4.0 Conclusion

The chapter discussed the nature of differànce in the Zambian novel in English as depcited in Musenge's *Changing Shadows* (2014) and Luangala's *The Chosen Bud* (1991). It also established different ways in which different signs create and mediate alternative meanings in the empty spaces or gaps created by the absent signified. Of interest was how emptiness, traces, supplements and other mediations interact as conduits for deference and the institution of differences related to differànce or the play of signs. Generally, the task was to establish whether these signs, which do not have fixed meaning, can be considered as mere fixed transmissions from oral narratives to the novel.

It was firstly noted in the chapter that, the potential oral narrative signified is never present in the novel and that the sign in the novel is characterised by emptiness of meaning and chains of empty signifiers. It was further noted that, in the event of empty signifiers and absent signifieds, the sign is opened up to the play of detours, substitutions, representatives and proxies all in an effort to mediate the emptiness created by the absence of the desired signified. Yet, since these are simply mediations and not the signified, they cannot be considered pure or exact signifiers of the oral narrative as signified or anything that they follow in linearity. They are instead characterised by multiplication, dispersal and alterity. It was for instance demonstrated how the silence and emptiness of delayed communication in *Changing Shadows* (2014) introduced other atemporal moments of play besides the surface chronology of the delay. This kind of deference caused by the absence of the signified and resulting in the creation of chains of empty signifiers, detours, substitution and multiplication reflects the nature of play. I suggested that this play of signs characterises the relationship between the novel and oral narratives which always represent and absent signified and not fixed meaning.

Additionally, it was demonstrated that the movement of varied detours and proxies from one moment of signification to another is also the movement of supplementation, institution of traces but never the absent signified. This is because at every point of the process of signification or even the movement of signs from oral narratives to the novel, supplementation adds something to the signifier making it different from not only the previous signifier in the chain but also the desired signified from oral narratives. At the same time supplements leave traces in their path and it was particularly noted that traces abolish temporal distinctions of past, present and future, thereby

breaking the novel's sign from the chronological relationship with oral narratives. The abolition of such temporal distinctions was specifically observed in the view that the time Kasongo became mentally disturbed, he bore traces of the educated and sane man he was before but also traces of who he would become when he got better. Another angle of supplementation and institution of traces considered was on how different contexts and spatial interactions in the *Chosen Bud* (1991) supplement the signifier and advance the play of deference. This was especially observed in the way different contexts of the novel required that an explanation accompany most of the translated and untranslated songs in the novel as an addition or supplement to make up for the absent signified (song) from the indigenous context. Supplementation and traces, as illustrated by both the temporal and spatial relations of the sign in the two novels, suggest that rather than linearity and adoption of static or frozen images into the novel, signs in the novel are fluid as demonstrated by the alteration taking place as supplements are added leaving traces in their wake.

Therefore, as this chapter attempted to suggest, meaning of signs in the novel must not be sought in absolute signifieds, ancestry and linearity from oral narratives. Rather, they must be sought in the in-between places or emptiness created by the fact that the signs are always characterised by absence of an internal signified. As this chapter illustrated with repetitions and other deferrents or detours, meaning must be sought in the differences among different signifiers both in the temporal and spatial mediations of differance. This also means, as the deferral of voice demonstrated in *The Chosen Bud* (1991), the idea of linearity and chronology usually associated with oral narrative mnemonics is obliterated by the atemporal moments created by the back and forth movements of flashbacks and flash-forwards in the novel. Hence, in such cases and others, meaning must be sought in the traces and differences of the atemporal moments comprising of instances from and to which the play of signification is moving but never in a fixed signified from oral narratives.

Endnote

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[1] Absence/presence refers to Derrida's (1974) argument that the present always represents absence because of the lack of a logocentre. This is in annulment of Heidegger's view of being or existence as the articulable presence.

[2] The idea of the novel as a 'text' is based on the post-structuralist idea that there are no boundaries and no difference between the inside and outside of the book. As such, the novel and everything inside and outside of the text are simply part of one text which has neither beginning or end.

[3] Bemba is a language spoken by the Bemba tribe of Northern and Luapula provinces in Zambia.

[4] CiChewa is a language spoken in Eastern Zambia and parts of Malawi.

Chapter Four: Unstable Time and Space (Chronotope) Relations of Images in *Tongue of the Dumb* and *Quills of Desire*

4.1 Introduction

Oral Narrative mnemonic devices and/or images cannot be an indicator of linearity from oral narratives to the novel because the transfer from one stage to another and within the text is flawed by the dynamism, variability and mutability of their inherent time and space relations (Bakhtin, 1981). The idea of linearity is related to many post-colonial nations' desire to create collective memories by using indigenous oral narrative mnemonic methods and static images in literature to ensure continuous cultural identity through time (Ashcroft, et al., 2004; Olick, et al., 2011). The stress on indigenous oral narrative ascendency to the novel is perpetuated by literary decolonisation theorists such as waThiongo (1986) and Chinweizu (1985) who insist on indigenous traditional elements while glossing over other factors that may influence the novel. In the present chapter I challenge the fixation on linearity on the supposition that the inevitable relatedness of time and space (the chronotope) in any mental construction, makes stability of images in the novel and from oral narratives impossible. I use images in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) and *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) to argue that, firstly, images in both novels depict flexible interaction and diversity of different time-space relations from different genres and fictional worlds (Bakhtin, 1981). Secondly, that the internal construction of time and space of images (chronotopes) is subjective, multi-levelled and subject to indefinite inter and intra-level relations. Such a move is related to the overarching argument of my thesis based on Derrida's (1974; 1978) deconstructionist rejection of logocentric thought that presupposes fixed structures with a fixed centre of meaning. As was the case with the two previous chapters, which drew on the way that Derrida (1974) uses the idea of a flawed sign, this chapter breaks down the basic structure or building blocks of images in the novel to "show how texts come to embarrass their own ruling systems of logic" (Eagleton, 2008, p. 116). To this end, I discuss the linear movement of chronotopes based on the formation of poly-systems (Eve-Zohar, 2005) in the historical novel, on the one hand, and the workings of pure duration (Bergson, 2009), on the other hand, as depicted in the novel *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007). Furthermore, I examine the ways in which different levels of chronotopic or artistic creation (Keunen, 2011) affect the stability of inter and

intra chronotopic (image relations) in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010). Hence, my concern is on whether oral narrative images in the novel, which are constructed on indefinite or unstable time and space relations, can be pure descendants of oral narrative images as stable entities.

My argument in this chapter is hinged on Bakhtin's (1981) idea of chronotopes –every artistic and imaginative mental construction is dictated by the unity of time and space (chronos and topos) (Keunen, 2011). The idea of chronotopes is influenced by the Kantian idea of the relativity (Bemong, 2010) and inseparability of time and space as categories through which human beings perceive the world. Artistic constructions use the same principle of relativity to create imagined worldviews in their own fictional time and space despite being born out of the imagination. As Bakhtin (1981, p. 84) notes: "We will give the name chronotope to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature…what counts for us is that it expresses the inseparability of space and time." As such, mnemonic images in both oral narratives and the novel are chronotopic by virtue of being fictional artistic constructions. If one follows the idea that time and space are not static entities, then chronotopes are equally unfixed entities which change with the movement of time. The observation that oral narrative images represent chronotopes and the related idea that they are not static is paramount for my intention to use such images to assert that oral narrative mnemonic images in the novel are not frozen descendants of oral narratives.

The idea of chronotopes and their non-linear movement from one genre to another impacts heavily on the fluidity of oral narrative images and related concerns discussed in this chapter. This is because Bakhtin's (1981) use of chronotopes as genre and temporal markers in the development of the novel, paradoxically reveals the dynamism of images and by extension that of oral narrative images. First of all, oral narrative mnemonic devices are, in a similar way that chronotopes are viewed as the building blocks of genres, considered as objects, phrases, symbols and patterns around which narratives are built to ensure memorability (Vansina, 1985; Ong, 2002). Yet, these images that are first propagated into tradition of an epoch change or give way to others that become markers of later epochs and genres. As Bakhtin (1981, p. 224) purports about novelistic chronotopes: "a novelistic sub-genre establishes a tempo-spatial norm, a chronotopic rule which is broken by subsequent genres." Hence, when the image, in this case an oral narrative image, moves on to another genre, such as the novel, and in ways that echo the movement of differànce

discussed in Chapter Three, its enunciation in a different context is its disappearance (Derrida, 2004). In this way a chronotope ironically, becomes the basis which discourages "any attempt at standardization, normativity, and rigid categorization of entire texts… [but] still a chronotopic 'definition' is useful as a structural tool in order to deconstruct generic categorisations and show their arbitrariness" (Gainser, et al., 2006, p. 5). Hence, images in this chapter are used, akin to Bakhtin's (1981) idea of novelistic chronotopes, as means of illustrating historical development of the novel. This then assists the deconstructionist agenda of demonstrating the evolution and effect of changing worlds and other contingent aspects on the novel over time. The chapter indeed challenges appositions towards fixity of images, such as the belief in linearity from oral narratives to the novel, by breaking down different time and space (chronotopic) relations of images in the novel.

It is important to point out that the discussion on chronotopes, which represent time and space that are not static, brings forth the idea of alterations in chronotopic and image character resulting from the workings of poly-systems (Eve-Zohar, 2005) and pure duration (Bergson, 2009). The alterations in chronotopic character have to do with inter/intra synchronic and diachronic relations and different individual perceptions of the world imaged on artistic creations respectively. The ideas of poly-systems and pure duration are paramount to establishing my assertion of dynamic and hence the variability and changeability related to the movement of images from oral narratives to the novel. This is because one chronotope remains the same in some texts while in others it changes and thus demonstrates that chronotopes relate in dynamic ways. Bakhtin (1981, p. 84) explains the relationship as follows: "Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible, likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterize the artistic chronotope." In this way, time and space cannot be separated as narrative events become the medium in which abstract time is observed. This translates into a poly-system in which, firstly, different images are altered as they relate at inter and intra level in the same epoch. For instance, the time and space in one narrative in the same historical moment may be merged with or exchanged with another in the same epoch. Secondly, material from different epochs or signifiers of different historical moments may find their way into a different epoch and be altered by the new environment in which they resurface. Bakhtin's (1981) temporal-spatial constellations and their movement through epoch's

and literary genres further demonstrate a strong affinity to the Bergsonian (2009, p. 36) view that "perception of the spatial world is coloured by the lived time experienced by the observer". The relationship between perception and the passage of time relates to my later discussion on pure duration, which best exemplifies the nature of alteration in image character brought about by images of affection, action and relation, and Ricoeur's (1984) threefold mimesis. The three-fold nature of pure duration is cardinal in pointing out that chronotopes born out of the interaction among images of affection, action and relation, as evidenced in the *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007), combine chronotopes from different epochs. As such, the differences in character of images in both the same period and with the passage of time illustrated by poly-systems and pure duration demonstrate that oral narrative images in the novel cannot be considered pure ancestors of oral narratives.

Furthermore, the notion that time and space relations in a chronotope and between chronotopes varies, can be illustrated by the observation that chronotopes comprise of different levels of mental construction that operate in dynamic ways advancing the idea of instability and non-linearity of images from oral narratives to the novel. The different levels influence one another variably and any alterations to the internal composition of the individual levels affect the holistic character of the chronotope or image. As Keunen (2011, p. 39) observes: "The method of distinguishing between levels of abstraction (action-space, plot-space and worldview) clearly establishes the fact that chronotopic constructs can be very different from each other". The three levels of chronotopic construction function in such a way that the action-space (actions, events, characters) chronotope with its specific spatial and temporal constellation may be influenced by the type of worldview (experience portrayed) and plot-space chronotope (plot) it interacts with. In addition, individual levels, such as the action-space, have varied and indefinite possible internal compositions. The fact that every fictional construction is based on different concepts of time (and worldview) means different chronotopes are established every single time. For instance, Bakhtin's (1981) adventure time in the Greek novel and everyday life are different because of different temporal patterns (chance versus biographical time) and consequently different chronotopes or motifs around which the plots are built. There is a relationship among the three levels to an extent that one cannot expect to change one of the three and yet remain with the same chronotope. The complexity attached to the construction of fluid chronotopes in relation to complex inter and intra level interaction of

levels of artistic construction is highlighted later on in the discussion of images in *Quills of Desire* (2010). This is very important to my assertion that oral narrative mnemonic images or chronotopes are not simple ancestors of images in the novel.

4.2 *Tongue of the Dumb*

The novel is set in fictional Mpona village in the eastern part of Zambia during the colonial period. It explores the conflicts that arise due to the introduction of colonial administration and Christianity in the village and the results of the clashes that take place between the indigenous villagers, their beliefs and new ideas brought by colonialism. Most of the narrative springs from the case of a young dumb boy named Mwape who is taken to the hospital in the capital city, Lusaka, by one of the white fathers (Oliver) to get medical attention for his dumbness. This raises misunderstandings among the locals who have their misgivings over the move because it undermines their belief that this and many of the other calamities, such as floods, famine and whirlwinds, which they experience are acts of the gods and spirits. One of the elders named Lubinda uses the misunderstandings to forward his political ambitions and interest in the recently widowed female character Natombi whose husband Dulani dies in a flood. As Such, Lubinda plants seeds of distrust among the villagers by conspicuously suggesting that chief Mpona, Natombi (the mother to Mwape) and the teacher, are witches who connived with the White Fathers to kill Mwape at the hospital. All these accusations are, however, dispelled when Mwape returns to the village cured of his dumbness just before the trio are condemned as witches at the sacred caves.

4.2.1 Zambian Historical Novel, Poly-systems, Pure Duration and the Deconstruction of Linearity from Oral Narratives to the Novel[1]

This section profers the idea that images or chronotopes in the historical novel cannot be considered a linear continuation and replication of oral narratives because they are different poly-systems (Eve-Zohar, 2005) and products of Pure Duration (Bergson, 2009). This assertion is based on the observation that such a novel is often laced with images that are meant to glorify a lost indigenous world as part of the nationalist agenda of many post-colonial states (Ashcroft, 2004). Bemong (2010, p. 170), in his discussion on how literature was used with a nationalist agenda in 19th century Belgium, delineates three criteria for the selection of images for historical novels. Firstly, the images should be able to evoke nationalist feelings using glorious episodes from the ancestral past. Secondly, they should disseminate knowledge about the national past and thirdly

they must emphasise the genealogical connection between ancestral and contemporary virtues or manners. Hence, the Zambian historical novel includes images such as legendary and mythical aspects, the everyday life and value systems of indigenous life often found in oral narratives.

Tongue of the Dumb (Mulaisho, 1971) first published in 1971, but set in the 1940's, is an example of a historical novel which contains images that point to a nationalist agenda mirroring Achebe's (1958) *Things Fall Apart* (Dathorne, 1970; Mbwayu, 1987; Primorac, 2014; Chilala, 2016). One can point to the depiction of Mpona village and everyday activities, such as harvests and the coming of age ceremonies, as representations of indigenous Zambian traditional life. The depicted society also believed in the supernatural as reflected in the consultation of the spirits over Dulani's mysterious death or the belief that Mwape's dumb condition from birth is an act of the spirits (in the absence of any human explanation). These examples emblematise the desire to use these and other images, which are often used in oral narratives as mnemonic images in order to evoke a lost indigenous voice similar to the Belgian nationalist agenda above. However, the presence of these mnemonic images and others inadvertently lays bare the fact that the images used in oral narratives, which are usually from the repertoire of indigenous Zambian traditional corpus are not the same as those co-opted into the historical novel. Hence, this section uses the images in *Tongue of the Dumb* (1971) to challenge the idea of linearity from orality to the novel, particularly the historical novel. I firstly propose that, in a similar way to Belgian chronotopes, the images and the novel's chronotopes are part of a poly-system and pure duration made up of inter and intra relations among chronotopes and not simply the product of one genre such as the oral narrative. In so doing, I assert that a historical Zambian novel such as *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) and its images (chronotopes) cannot be viewed as a linear continuation from oral narratives.

4.2.1.1 Polysystematic Relations among Images

To begin with, the desire for linear continuity from indigenous oral narratives to the historical novel is betrayed by the need to combine different chronotopes (such as the fantastic, adventure and documentary) that do not belong to a single novelistic genre or literary corpus. This is a threat to the agenda of establishing an autonomous national literary canon marked by a nostalgia and glorification of a lost and pristine indigenous identity that linearity would entail. The different combinations present in the Zambian historical novel resonate with Bemong's (2010) observation over the three image selection criteria (glorification of the past, dissemination of information about

national past and stress on past and present genealogical link) for 19th century Belgian novels. This relationship reveals a novelistic chronotope comprising of various time and space relations and in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) we witness a combination of different time and space relations, which are also not an evocation of a lost indigenous voice or world. This is observed in that, on one hand, the text opens with a depiction of an idyllic or indigenous oral narrative type of village where weather patterns, such as periodical drought and famine are purely dependent on mystical and not geographical or scientific explanations. The absence of rain for instance is "because the people forgot to pray to the Rain spirit and offer sacrifices to it" (Mulaisho, 2007, p. 1). On the other hand, this is firstly intertwined with other novelistic genre types such as the Greek adventure novel (Bakhtin, 1981), the characteristics of which we observe in Chief Mpona's vindication over witchcraft allegations being dependent on chance ('suddenly' and 'just in time').[2] Mwape, the deaf boy arrives suddenly and just on time to save the chief from drinking the *Mwabvi* (a test for witchcraft which results in death for both the innocent or guilty party) and proves the accusations unjustified. Secondly, one observes the everyday adventure novelistic genre (Bakhtin, 1981) through the eyes of the teacher who: "In a certain kind of way he was one of the village, and yet there was a manner in which he was not one of them" (Mulaisho, 2007, p. 23). He introduces western education to the village but in a similar way to Bakhtin's (1981), reference to Lucious and the Golden Ass in his discussion of the Everyday Adventure novel (Bakhtin, 1981), he remains an outsider. Although, Lubinda's use of the teacher as a scapegoat and diversion from his clandestine ambitions for chieftainship and interest in Natombi (by accusing the teacher of witchcraft and being Natombi's lover) is different, it equally provides lenses through which we observe the everyday life, power struggles, marriages and superstitions encountered in Mpona village. The fact that the novel combines three types of images: the idyll, adventure of ordeal and everyday adventure novelistic type means the novel can no longer be a chronotopic representation of linear continuity from oral narratives or one but many representations of time and space. This means that the historical and nationalist novel cannot be a pure linear continuation from orality.

Furthermore, the different literary genres and types combined in a historical novel form a new and entirely different chronotope that is no longer identifiable with any of its comprising images. This means that the different specific times and spaces represented by various chronotopes, in this case oral narrative images, disintegrate, cease to relate and function as they did before, and would now

function and relate in the context of a new time and space (Bakhtin, 1981; Morson and Emerson, 1990). According to Even-Zohar (2005, p. 40), such artistic creations must be viewed as 'poly-systems' –"a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole whose members are interdependent." Hence, this justifies my view that although the material or chronotopes used in the Zambian historical novel is varied and from different sources, it comes together to form a new independent chronotope.

One can consider how the chronotope discussed above, which includes three chronotopic representations –adventure ordeal, everyday adventure and the idyll demonstrates that *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) is a 'poly-system'. The idyll chronotope brings the fantastic into the text in a way typical of the Bakhtinian (Bakhtin, 1981) folklore, which previously operated on its own temporal and spatial terms. The fantastic in the novel is shown in the Mpona village's belief in the existence of a parallel universe of gods and spirits. This universe operates in an extra-temporal space where the spirits and gods would enter the village and the human world on special assignment in a way synonymous with mythical worldviews created by oral narrative mnemonics. For instance the witchcraft trial in which the teacher, Chief Mpona and Natombi are tried, is held outside the sacred cave believed to be the home of the gods. Furthermore, the teacher's severe beating by Lubinda and his nephew is readily believed to be an act of the spirits by the villagers in accordance with the duo's claim. The black ants that cross Dulani's path twice are also viewed as a message from the spirits signalling his eminent death. The use of such a chronotope in the novel is combined with the chronotope involving the white missionaries and the teacher who function in a different temporal and spatial dispensation as demonstrated by the teacher's refusal to mourn Dulani like the villagers: "I am a Christian', said the Aphunzitsi…I cannot mourn in the pagan way" (Mulaisho, 2007, p. 25). This chronotope involving a Christian and western lifestyle represents a different system than the traditional life of Mpona village, yet both merge to form one novelistic chronotope of pre-independence Zambia in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007). Therefore, oral narrative images, such as those relating to location and the fantastic, cannot simply be replicated in the novel. The blend between the idyll or fantastic and the everyday life of the missionaries in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) and by extension the historical novel demonstrates that, while other images are disintegrated, others are created. This means that oral

narrative mnemonic images in the novel also go through the same process of disintegration and integration into new relationships in the novel and as a result cannot simply be imitations or linear continuation from oral narratives.

The idea of 'poly-systems' and the creation of new chronotopes is important because it uncovers inter and intra synchronic relations among chronotopes, and reveals their dynamic nature. It is possible to identify the use of the same chronotopes many times within a text (motifs), among texts in the same novelistic genre and across genres such as oral narratives and the novel in the same epoch. Yet, one needs to understand that when a chronotope is used many times in the novel as a motif, its inherent relations or chronotopic character at each point of enunciation in the text is different. That is why Bakhtin (1981, p. 252) asserts of the novelistic chronotope that "each such chronotope can include within it an unlimited number of minor chronotopes; in fact…any motif may have a specific chronotope of its own." Hence, while a generic chronotope (such as the novel as a whole) can come from the oral narrative genre for instance, the minor chronotopes comprised in the text such as motifs may come from other oral narratives and texts and possess their own chronotopic character.[3]

There is one generic chronotope related to the Zambian historical novel reflected in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007), which highlights the dynamic intra synchronic relations using the everyday adventure chronotope. It is clear that the everyday adventure world of Zambia's colonial period portrayed in *Tongue of the Dumb* (2007) is characterised by conflict as a recurring motif. This conflict can be identified at different levels such as between the villagers and the District Commissioner symbolised in contestation over ruling in support of building pit latrines. Another conflict is depicted in conservatives such as Lubinda (including other elders), on the one hand, versus the more progressive teacher and others, on the other hand, who embrace the white man's schools and healthcare. Further conflict is identified between father Gilbert who treats the Africans with tolerance and father Oliver who believes in the use of a tough approach to win African converts. In all three cases, the motif of conflict has its own chronotopic (space and time) character despite the fact that the conflicts take place in the everyday time of the colonial period. For instance, the nature of the conflict between the two white fathers takes place specifically at the mission, which is appropriate because this is where they are stationed and they are directly in contact with the local people, such that they have to be tolerant or hard on the villagers. Similarly,

the conflict among the villagers about whether to embrace western healthcare, as exemplified by Mwape's dumbness, can only take place in the village space, which comprises two types of people –those that believe in the white man's medicine and its ability to heal Mwape and those that do not. Therefore, the image or chronotope in the historical novel cannot be considered a descendant or linear continuation from oral narratives owing to the fact that chronotopic configuration, even in a single text, differs in the various illustrations of the same image.

In addition, the creation of new chronotopes affects inter and intra diachronic relationships of images in a similar way to the chronotopic variations witnessed at synchronic level as discussed above. This is because the movement of time alters the nature and role played by a motivic image, which becomes an important marker of different temporal and historical moments. One can refer to how the 'castle' is considered an important marker of defining moments in the development of the historical novel because it represents different things at different historical moments (Bakhtin, 1981). Therefore, while a historical novel may contain motivic chronotopes such as the village set up in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) that bear resemblance to those from an earlier African or Zambian historical novel, in this case oral narratives, they cannot be considered the same. This includes instances where a single author uses the 'same' motivic images over time. I am particularly interested in the diachronic movement and nature of images from oral narratives to the novel. The kind of movement of images envisioned here is explained better from Wertsch's (2008) idea of schematic narratives, which involves the mapping or identifying patterns among narratives from different historical moments using similarities among them. Although similarities and schematic narrative templates concerning a collective memorialisation of the Second World War could be mapped, the study demonstrates cognisance that there were enough differences to warrant civil disorder in Estonia. Most important to the relationship between oral narratives and the Zambian historical novel is the variation between war narratives from the older generation who fought or lived during the war on one hand and the post-war generation. Wertsch's (2008) study reveals differences in narratives based on different temporal experiences, which is relevant to inter diachronic variations and our assertion that the novel is not a linear continuation of oral narratives but a product of dynamism and difference. In *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007), I use the idyll chronotope of a pristine village (untouched by technology or scientific interpretation of weather) cited earlier to illustrate the present assertion that time takes its toll on chronotopes and alters them.

Apart from the village set up, the fantastic is evidenced in the superstitious belief that every calamity such as the flood, whirlwind, locust invasion and Dulani's mysterious fatal dance with a python and his drowning are acts of witchcraft or anger from the gods. Elements of the fantastic and supernatural of this nature are often the main source of images for indigenous oral narratives, especially pre-colonial ones. Thus, the fantastic, in texts such as *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007)*,* belongs to a parallel world and represents a different chronotope from the one in which the main action of the novel unfolds.

Furthermore, as noted in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007), the fantastic worldview is conflated with other worlds such as the real world (Mpona village) or the missionaries' and the teacher's Christian world that it co-exists with. It is for this reason that differences in beliefs of the different worlds raises misunderstanding among the villagers of Mpona over Mwape's referral by a white missionary to western hospital to seek attention over his vocal impairment. The inevitable co-existence of different worlds in *Tongue of the Dumb* (2007) illustrates the diachronic change of a chronotope from homogeneous to heterogeneous. As such, although one can map motivic schemes based on the presence of the fantastic motif of the idyllic chronotope between oral narratives and the novel, they can also recognise that both genres are operating as different chronotopes. Hence, the novel and orality cannot have chronotopic resemblance or a linear relationship.

4.2.1.2 Subjective Perception and the Variability of Images

This sub-section discusses the idea that the novel cannot be a linear progression from oral narratives because its creation is centred on the workings of 'pure duration' which signifies a world on the move. Artistic creations are dependent on an individual's perception of the world meaning as the world changes, so do people's different perceptions and representations of it in artistic creations. The relationship between contextual awareness and artistic creation reflects Bergson's (2009) idea of 'pure duration' that he proposes as the truest reflection of experience because it postulates that the past lingers on in present moments and that both merge to form a distinct moment or chronotope that is different from the two individual temporal moments. The implication is that every artistic creation is a threefold construction between someone's previous experiences, their perception of the past experiences in relation to the present and the re-imaging of these in artistic creations such as the novel. To put it succinctly, "The aesthetic experiences expressed by

artistic chronotopes combine the cultural context with the dynamics of human consciousness" (Keunen, 2010, p. 40). 'Cultural context' in this case may be considered in the same light as 'individual experiences' mentioned by Bergson (2009) on pure duration, which are mostly drawn from a cultural or communal corpus of experiences. Hence, both Bergson's (2009) views and the threefold implication on literary artistic creations are important in establishing the variability and vitality of images in the novel and making them different from their oral predecessors.

To begin with, artistic chronotopes are created using the cultural context (individual experiences) and the dynamics of human consciousness and in that way differ from one another. To this effect, this sub-section section examines how *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007), a contextually Zambian post-colonial novel set in the colonial period, combines chronotopes from different periods with the author's interpretation of these images in the artistic creation (text). The aim is to substantiate the view that novelistic images are mutable and not static. For instance, the motif concerning conflict between conservative and progressive ideas discussed earlier, which flagged both the Zambian colonial period and its portrayal in historical novels (Mbwayu, 1987; Primorac, 2014), is relevant here. That is, conservative and progressive ideas clash in one episode where the Mpona villagers led by their chief and elders resist the District commanders' order to build pit latrines because they view the directive as an intrusion on their traditions and their long lived practice of relieving themselves in the bush. Such clashes between the old and new ways of doing things are common in novels of this period but the creation of Lubinda as the elder who uses such a conflict to forward his ambitions is purely Mulaisho's (2007) creation. Thus, the elderly character takes advantage of the people's scepticism over new ideas such as modern sanitation discussed above, education and healthcare to breed doubt in the villagers over the chief's leadership ability in a bid to oust him from power. This is because the chief allows both the building of a school in the village and Mwape, the dumb boy, to access healthcare at a white man's hospital. All this points to the fact that chronotopes are dynamic and changeable owing to the author's use of past experience or pre-knowledge (conflict between old and new ideas) combined with his perception (Lubinda's opportunistic behaviour) to create an entirely new chronotope.

The artistic construction is important to our deconstruction of linearity from oral narratives to the novel because it demonstrates that the use of oral narrative mnemonics is not a simple incorporation as frozen entities but one that is part of a complex and rigorous process of

deconstruction and reconstruction. To begin with, oral narrative mnemonic images in the novel cannot simply be a linear continuation from oral narratives because the images from past knowledge usually function as 'images of affection' or the building blocks on which new ones are formed in the novel. The chronotope or 'image of affection' in the new context of the novel interacts with or affects other contingent factors resulting in a chronotope that is different and does not play the same role even if it bears traces of the previous context. Images of affection are defined as "these chronotopes [that] show a subject that is closely involved with the world and is affected by its (social and physical) environment and the impressions left by it" (Bergson, 2009, p. 43). As a result, one cannot dispel or separate artistic creations, such as the historical novel, from their interaction with the society or culture from which they are constituted because they are often representative of what someone's perception adds to it through an artistic creation (Chilala, 2012). I argue that these observations can be applied to mnemonic images, which are first propagated by the oral narrative artist, and by virtue of being mnemonic get picked up and used by a novelist in a novel. The act of 'affecting' is illustrated by Bakhtin's (1981) chronotope of the road (encounter) exemplified by encounters such as marriage (chronotope of affection) which brings together a couple (target of affect) and alters their chronotopic dispensation at the same time. The above discussed lenses can be used to view the last event in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) where Chief Mpona, the teacher and Natombi are to be tried for witchcraft, as a chronotope of encounter (meeting) or affect between the old and the new. The encounter affects the chronotope representing old indigenous beliefs and the chronotope representing new Christian and western ideas and thus forming a new chronotope that is a blend between old and new beliefs. On the one hand, we have the sceptical villagers who are about to condemn chief Mpona, Natombi and the teacher as witches at a traditional witchcraft trial, which symbolises indigenous tradition. On the other hand, we have father Oliver, a white priest who comes to pay a priestly visit to chief Mpona, and Mwape who has just been healed by a white man's hospital appearing unexpectedly and symbolising new ideas. This chronotope of meeting affects the artistic world of the novel and forms a new chronotope. It is clear from the way the villagers abandon their accusations of witchcraft on the trio that Mwape's return, which was the basis of the accusations, reconciles them to the new ideas of healthcare. One can observe the effect in the teacher and the way he urges Mwape to greet his saviour, father Oliver (who arranged for the boy's treatment) thus symbolising the occurrence of the pacification and reconciliation of old and new ideas.

It is also clear that the chronotope of conflict, which shaped the world of the novel before this last encounter, is different from the one of reconciliation constituted after the encounter at the sacred caves. Father Oliver has experienced a change of heart after the death of his superior and resolves to treat the villagers with more tolerance than before. His presence in Mpona village is a fulfilment of his superior's last wishes. Parallels can be drawn between the situation above and pure duration or the tripartite arrangement of artistic construction, which reveals a constantly changing movement of images from one genre or text to another. That is, the text reflects past experience in the idyll of the village separate from the white man's world, its clashes with the colonial ideals and the eventual reconciliation between the two when they meet as represented in the art (artistic creation). As such, chronotopes of affection, such as the one of encounter above, demonstrate that the image from oral narratives is not frozen or a linear progression when it enters the novel because it changes as it merges with other images in the novel.

The above-discussed images previously represent images that dare to cross a threshold from oral narratives to the novel by accommodating and assimilating new information and in that way revealing dynamism and difference. The crossover illustrates the essence of 'pure duration' –a willingness to move beyond the strictures of rigid and selective perception, which holds on to past experiences at the expense of all other factors affecting the present. It is the courage to resist stagnation, cross boundaries of literary culture and enter into new relationships with other images that makes oral narrative mnemonic images in the novel different from their oral narrative counterparts. As Bakhtin (1981, p. 248) observes, "At the heart of this temporal-spatial construction is the will of the subject to process new information and to take new decisions…to step over the threshold". Therefore, there is a sense in which such constructions or chronotopes characteristically resist the temptation to remain stagnant and propagate old ideas at the expense of new ideas with which they interact.

In novels, we often witness images crossing the threshold of indigenous literary corpus to dynamic relations in "places where crisis events occur, the falls, resurrections, renewals, epiphanies, decisions that determine the whole life of a man" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 248). Such a place is illustrated in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) by the chief's court, which is (in many oral narratives) representative of conservatism and indigenous beliefs as it is the place where the culture and traditions of the kingdom were propagated and conserved. The court, therefore, becomes a

determining factor on whether the threshold of change will be crossed or not in the face of new ideas that colonialism brings since it is a meeting place (chronotope of encounter) or sort of parliament to debate on ideas. Lubinda, reflects the desire to maintain indigenous beliefs and a chronotope of the idyllic village by planting the seeds of suspicion for witchcraft over calamities such as the whirlwind, locust invasion and others that have befallen the village. It is at the same court that the elders decide that a Kamcape or witch finder be called to identify the witch and it is here that the teacher's fate is decided upon when he is identified as the witch. Furthermore, the idea to build a school is constituted at the court and thus demonstrates the first attempt to cross the threshold or boundaries of indigenous closure. In this way, the space of the court is portrayed as a meeting place, which facilitates the crossing over a threshold. This is similar to Bakhtin's (1981) reference to the salon and parlour in novels of the provincial town, which functioned as a drinking place and place where new chronotopes are born because it acts as a place where different people meet and exchange ideas. Hence, if the court or the witchcraft trial discussed previously are a chronotope representing the preservation of indigenous culture, as would be the case in an oral narrative, in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007), it also represents the crossing over a threshold and the alterable nature of chronotopes and images in the novel.

It must be noted that the dynamism and ability for images of affection to cross the threshold is related to their interaction with images of action. In this case, one may postulate that oral narrative mnemonic images are images drawn from past experience (images of affection) and the images in the novel would be the same images yet coloured by perception (images of action) and resulting in new chronotopes (Bergson, 2009). In terms of pure duration, past experience (images of affection) are used by authors (perception) to create an artistic work, which merges experience, perception and the mental imagination as expressed by the actions in the work of art. Bakhtin (1981, p. 247) purports that the relationship between prior chronotopes and images of action in the novel is such that: here the graphically visible markers of historical time as well as of biographical and everyday time are concentrated and condensed, and at the same time they are intertwined with each other in the tightest possible fashion and fused into unitary markers of the epoch. In this case, chronotopes that signify an epoch in real time or real life (chronotopes of affection or previous experience) such as indigenous traditional beliefs, as the case may be with historical novels such as *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007), merge with other chronotopes representing a character's

private life for instance. This creates a new distinct chronotope as markers of another epoch. Chronotopes born from such an undertaking are often relative as both individual texts and genres portray different relations between images of affection and images of action. For instance, in *Tongue of the Dumb* (2007), chief Mpona is a symbol and custodian of indigenous beliefs of the people of Mpona village. This is an artistic representation of a chief's role in real pre-colonial historical time and must therefore be viewed in the same light with a chronotope of affection.

However, we observe the chief's transformation from a chronotope of affection governed by the strictures of indigenous tradition to his open-minded accommodation of the white man's school, education and medicine (image of action). In this way, he is no longer operating in the confines of the chronotope or image of affection but in a new chronotopic era that marks the effect of colonial rule on some chiefs even in real time. Interestingly, the fact that he and his people do not accept all the foreign ideas as demonstrated by their rejection of digging pit latrines (which may be accepted by other chiefs while they reject some of the other ideas accepted by chief Mpona), demonstrates the relativity of relations between images of affection and images of action. Hence, in all the cases in the novel genre and oral narratives, the fusion of images of affection and images of action create entirely new, relative, dynamic chronotopes and these indicate the flexibility of the sign in fictional constructions. The volatility and mutability demonstrated by the sign in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) means, both oral narrative images and images in the novel are incapable of being the absolute signifier and signified that linear progression of mnemonic images from oral narrative mnemonic images to the novel would presuppose.

In addition, the interaction between images of affection and images of action and the associated formation of new chronotopes resonates with Riceour's (1984) idea of threefold mimesis. This is the understanding that images or chronotopes of affection are drawn from the real world and applied to artistic creations. At this point, new chronotopes are born through the relationship between images of affection and images of action in much the same way as the workings of 'pure duration'. Furthermore, these new chronotopes are ploughed back into society from which the cycle starts over and new chronotopes are born. Riceour (1984, p. 53) distinguishes between mimesis[1], mimesis[2] and mimesis[3]. That is a process "by which the textual configuration mediates between prefiguration of the practical field and its refiguration through the reception of work." This view relates to the idea of 'pure duration' and that every author makes use of some sort of

pre-knowledge or understanding (mimesis[1]) of both the real and literary world that they use to create their own imaginative work (mimesis[2]). This creation alters the pre-knowledge (Mimesis[3]) that the author used in the first place. That is after the artistic construction has also been transformed (by what the author adds from his imagination or consciousness) re-entering the world through readers and continuing the cyclic movement of images. The movement is not so much a cyclical one but a spiral one (Vanderhaagen, 2013) because images are not moving in a fixed cyclical way but a spiralling one that represents the flexible alterable movement. In *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007), the threefold mimesis is evidenced by the way chronotopes, such as the one represented by conflict between conservative and progression, which has been the centre of my argument so far, are not the same at the end of the novel. There is a clear distinction between the nature of the chronotopes when they enter the action space as images of affection and after they have interacted with the action space. This is observed firstly in the colonial government idea to dig latrines in Mpona village (image of affection, mimesis[1]) where we observe a clash between the District commissioners' orders to dig the latrines and the villagers' refusal to do so (image of action, mimesis[2]). Secondly, accusations of witchcraft (image of affection, mimesis[1]), levelled against the chief, Natombi and the teacher, demonstrate a clash over guilt and innocence during the witch trial (image of action, mimesis[2]). Thirdly, conservative ideas (image of affection, mimesis[1]) bring conflict in the chief's court where village deliberations are held (image of action, mimesis[2]). In all three instances the resulting image, which are to enter the world as mimesis[3], are different from the one that entered the text in the first place. In the first instance, the clash over pit latrines results in the intensification of conflict between the people and the commissioner, in the second instance, the clash over witchcraft accusations results in reconciliation as the people accept both the white father and Mwape after he is healed. In the last instance, the chief's open mindedness to the ideas brought by colonial administration, such as education, breeds internal strife among the elders. The three instances prove that the results of action on the chronotope demonstrated by the three instances are few of the many possible results of the conflict image's encounter in the novel. The three stages through which a chronotope passes and the many possibilities created from its interaction in the novel indicate the dynamic and changeable nature of chronotopes, which cannot simply be a linear continuation or replication from oral narratives to the novel.

4.3 Quills of Desire

The novel is set in a fictitious early post-independence Zambia with events occurring at various settings, which are an unnamed village in the Northern part of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda Secondary School and in the capital city of Zambia, Lusaka. The narrative depicts the conflict between Wiza's indigenous Zambian background and his ambitions to get educated and modernised. It follows Wiza's journey to Kenneth Kaunda Secondary School where he excels academically despite his temperamental nature. His temper often gets him into trouble and he gets expelled when a hurtful prefect, Yona, reports him to the head teacher, Mr Dasgupta (who equally hates him) after following and catching him spending the night with Evi, a girl from a girls' school during the Provincial Science fair. After this, Wiza travels to the city and then Mpulungu harbour awaiting his brother Kocha's return from the United Kingdom where he is studying. Wiza hopes that his brother will help him continue his education and so he avoids going home to escape his father Chambuleni's resolve to marry him off. When Kocha delays his return, Wiza is forced into the marriage by his father to which he resigns but kills himself soon after the wedding and on the day after Kocha returns home.

4.3.1 Tripartite Chronotopic Construction and Deconstruction of Linearity from Oral Narratives to the Novel[4]

This section discusses the idea that all chronotopes in the novel comprise three levels of artistic construction, which are not a linear continuation or replication of oral narrative images. Generally, we perceive an artistic image or creation as a homogenous unit representing a specific unified temporal-spatial construct. However, each artistic chronotope consists of three different levels (Keunen, 2011) which make different chronotopes function differently and dynamically. That is, the plot-space represents a series of events or moments that make up the overarching chronotope of a narrative; the action-space supports events, concretises character actions and makes visible the plot-space events; and the worldview space refers to the set of ontological features or patterns of experience that characterise a novelistic chronotope (Richardson, 2005). This means we are dealing with signs that represent a totality made up of inherently heterogeneous entities incapable of being a pure signifier of oral narratives. For instance, the general chronotope or plot-space that governs *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) is the period between Wiza's final year of secondary school and the time he commits suicide. This includes a series of events such as Wiza's stay and expulsion from school, his brief stay in the capital city and his return to the village where he is

forced into marriage untill he eventually kills himself as a sign of his rejection of the marriage. Thus, the plot does not represent Wiza's entire biographical life, but in a way similar to Bakhtin's (1981) "adventure novel of everyday life," it represents aspects of Wiza's life.

The plot is firmly tied to spaces such as the village, the school and the city where Wiza stays briefly and where the crises unfold. If we follow Bakhtinian (1981) chronotopes where the worldview corresponds with that of the everyday adventure time in which the hero is on a quest for self-discovery, then the discovery in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) is tied to Wiza's search for identity as his desire for education and modernity clash with the demands of indigenous tradition. One realises that we are concerned with a multi-layered and complex construction incapable of referring to a single homogenous chronotopic construction from oral narratives. It is for this reason that this section deconstructs the idea of a stable chronotope by breaking it down into its three different levels of construction and establishing that these different levels relate in not one but many capricious ways. Furthermore, the different levels of construction, even at individual level, represent dynamic intra-chronotopic relations. Therefore, this section deconstructs chronotopes in *Quills of Desire* (2007) to reveal both different levels and internal relations among them and thus goes a step further than the discussion on *Tongue of the Dumb* (2007), which deconstructs the stability of chronotopes from a general perspective.

4.3.1.1 Levels of Chronotopic Construction and Internal Ambiguity of the Novel's Images

Images in the novel are ambiguous because of various and unpredictable relations among the three levels of chronotopic construction. This characteristic of images arises from the many possible plot-spaces, action-spaces and worldviews. Thus, the varying combinations of these levels are created in texts. As such, "the spatial and temporal configurations of each genre determine in large part the kinds of action a fictional character may undertake in that given world (without being iconoclastic, a realist hero cannot slay mythical beasts, and a questing knight cannot philosophize over drinks in a café)" (Falconer, 2010, p. 112). If we consider the three levels of chronotopic construction as 'micro-chronotopes' of the novel (as a generic or general chronotope) then it follows that the three levels influence each other and determine the kind of chronotopes and chronotopic relations in a particular narrative. In addition, as indicated in the quotation above, a mythical world or worldview determines the kind of hero (action space) and the actions they can perform specific and appropriate to the kind of experience expected there. In the same way, the

worldview or experiences reflected in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) includes life in the village, at school and in the capital city, where the main character, Wiza is expected to act as required by the respective spaces and their worldview. At school, we observe him taking part in academic-related issues such as the Debate Club and Junior Engineering Technicians activities, and non-academic activities such as mockery of other students, general cleaning of dormitories and other daily activities specific to Kenneth Kaunda Secondary School. He also settles into the daily routine of the village, which includes helping out in the field, hunting, setting traps and drinking the traditional brew Katubi and Katata, when at home in the village. At no time does one observe Wiza behaving contrary to the expectations of the worldview represented in each space or environment. The interrelatedness and interdependency of the three different chronotopic levels is observed in Wiza's ability to distinguish his behaviour depending on the worldview he interacts with. This reveals that no single chronotope or image can remain the same from oral narratives because the idea of the three levels means they enter into different chronotopic relations in the novel (being the character's, in this case Wiza's, specified interaction with different worldviews) as required by affiliation into the chronotope of the novel.

The interaction among the three levels of chronotopic construction means different chronotopes come together and interact as a form of heterochrony. Conceptually, 'heterochrony' can appropriately be broken down as 'hetero' (many) and ('chrony') time, which means the term refers to a combination of 'many temporal' constructs such as chronotopes. Falconer (2010, p. 112) coins this term after Bakhtin's (1981) heteroglossia and purports that heterochrony "is the spatio-temporal equivalent of linguistic heteroglossia, and if we examine any of Bakhtin's readings of particular chronotopes closely enough, we will find evidence of heterochronic conflict." Indeed the workings of different levels of chronotopic construction can be likened to heteroglossia, which I discussed in Chapter Two in relation to the coming together of different images that relate in dynamic ways. Furthermore, one can discern the three levels of chronotopic construction, and their combined individual spatial-temporal relations in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010). The novel's plot space is characterised by the coming together of time and space of everyday life adventure, which is in some cases in conflict with the hero's actions in the action space. The everyday adventure life is characterised by temporal emphasis on the key moments in Wiza's biographical life, such as his expulsion from school and his marriage to a girl in the village, and the places

where these actions take place. This chronotope is combined with the action space chronotope, which involves Wiza's actions, such as the resolve to work hard and avoid home and marriage when he gets expelled, aimed at acquiring western education. However, one observes a conflict and an eventual clash in that Wiza's action space or goal to get educated, even after his expulsion, runs contrary to the plot-space design, which moves him towards marriage. It is clear that the marriage is forced on him by his father who plans it secretly and only informs him about it on the actual day after he has tried to avoid it by running away from home each time it came up. The marriage is the last straw in driving the plot-space away from Wiza's action-space ambitions – away from education towards a married life in the village. Hence, the above example of heterochrony demonstrates the coming together of two different levels and chronotopic constructions of time and space because Wiza's desired actions are overshadowed by the actions demanded by the plot-space. In addition, it is clear that the expected result from the hero's quest such as Wiza's ambitions to get educated and modernised are differentiated from other texts and oral narratives by the specificity, requirements and influence of the plot-space on the action space. In *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) the plot space particularly requires Wiza to get married and settle in the village at the expense of his action-space ambitions as a result of the heterochronic nature of the novel. This underscores that the flexibility of images in fictional constructions, including those from oral narratives, which may take part in heterochrony of this nature in the novel cannot be claimed to be simple replications or linear continuation from oral narratives.

4.3.1.2 Internal Chronotopic Level Variation and Images in Quills of Desire (Sinyangwe, 2010)

This sub-section dissusses the idea that images in the novel can never simply be signifiers of oral narrative images because of internal chronotopic level variations and interactions.

4.3.1.2.1 Variability in Wiza's Actions and the Plot-space

Different internal dynamics related to individual levels of artistic construction result in varying classification of images belonging to the same level of construction. An image classified as an action-space chronotope in a genre, in this case an oral narrative, does not necessarily function with the same internal chronotopic configurations in another genre, such as the novel. For instance, in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) some action-space chronotopes stand out as images of equilibrium particularly because of their specified relation to Wiza and his actions. The equilibrium chronotope is defined as:

a detour from a state of peace and quiet that regains a state of peace and quiet through the medium of actions. Actions in an equilibrium chronotope are conceived in such a way that they wholly confirm the state of equilibrium. When an equilibrium chronotope contains elements of chance and contingency, they will invariably be presented as anomalies or deviations, which additionally benefit the equilibrium. (Keunen, 2011, p. 45)

This applies to the tendency by some novels to circulate around themes of stability, such as in the case where a happily married couple is threatened by challenges that include a cheating spouse but these threats are eventually quenched by confession, repentance and restoration of happiness. Hence, the role of such a chronotope (or theme of happiness in our example) is to make sure that the state of equilibrium (or the idyll as would be the case in many oral narratives) presented at the beginning of a narrative is maintained or restored at the end. Any other actions contrary to this goal are not beneficial to the equilibrium and it is the duty of the equilibrium chronotope to overshadow and subdue any such aspects and ensure that an equilibrium state is maintained or restored in the end.

In addition, the traditional marriage, which is at the centre of traditional life, demonstrates how Wiza's marriage acts as a chronotope meant to restore and maintain equilibrium in the village. The author describes how the stability and homogeneity of the village is threatened by Wiza's stubborn insistence on getting a western education and its associated values at the expense of manhood governed by the standards of the village (maintaining its idyllic and pristine image) and getting married to a girl from the village. Thus, Wiza's father exclaims, about education:

> I don't see anything coming out of it…I am talking about something more important –about you settling down. You are now over twenty-one and out of school. It is important that you settle down and start building a home. You must get married. (Sinyangwe, 2010, p. 126)

The above sentiments show that the education Wiza pursues for a while is simply considered by his father as a detour from his traditional path of becoming a man in the village. The 'marriage' chronotope's role is clear in this case, however, it is possible that it may be the agent of change in another novel or within the text if it was taken as a symbol of Wiza's change of heart from getting educated to honouring his traditional values. In this way, it would mirror Bahktin's chronotope of encounter (1981) (meeting that brings change) which is common in versions of an indigenous Zambian tale characterised by a competition for a girl's hand in marriage, which results in change

for the common man who wins and marries royalty in most cases (Vyas, 1969; N'gandu, 2009)**.** It is paramount to note that of the different possibilities, such as the case in which marriage is viewed as a symbol of the return to traditional values or change of status for the man that marries into royalty in indigenous oral narratives, interrupts states of equilibrium. Only in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) does it play the role of maintaining a static order of things because traditional marriage in the text is viewed as the propagation and continuation of Wiza's family requirements. These internal chronotopic variations of images, such as marriage in different contexts resulting from different levels of artistic construction confirm that an oral narrative mnemonic image in the novel cannot be considered a stable replication and linear continuation from oral narratives.

The equilibrium chronotope's ability to change roles in accordance with the context of the narrative highlight the other type of action-spaces that involve the conflict chronotope. This means that while an image, such as Wiza's marriage discussed in the above section, can maintain an equilibrium in one case or narrative, it might steer conflict – it may be the hands by which the equilibrium is broken in the first place. In order for this to happen or the conflict chronotope to be effective "time needs to be integrated in movements that conflict with the movement of the chronotope's center: the hero or heroine and his or her goals…the notion of meeting that contains the second condition a chronotope must meet in order to be called a conflict chronotope" (Keunen, 2011, p. 50). The above indeed underlines that time in the novel must move in favour of the conflict chronotope and not the heroes desired path in order for it to effect conflict. In addition, and related to Bakhtin's (1981) chronotope of the road, the 'notion of meeting' means that the hero meets with the conflict chronotope, which alters his or her destiny whether they like it or not. As Bakhtin (1981) asserts concerning the Greek adventure novel, both the meeting and fate of the hero is in the hands of gods of chance and things happen to the hero without his or her permission. That is why, seen from the perspective of Wiza's goal to get educated at all costs, the intended marriage to a village girl is a conflict chronotope because it curtails any hopes he has of getting educated. This creates conflict that destabilises the equilibrium related to his ambitions and spurns the events leading to his suicide. It is less wonder then that, no matter how hard he tries to escape the marriage by first going to the city when he is expelled and secondly becoming a fisherman in another town, he still finds the marriage plans by his parents waiting for him when he returns to the village.

It is also clear that time moves in favour of chance, fate and the conflict chronotope and not Wiza's desires. The novel depicts that the marriage happens at the right time and not sooner nor later. If Kocha, Wiza's brother had come home a day earlier or hours earlier or had not waited for morning to talk to Wiza after coming home, he would have prevented the marriage and suicide from taking place by supporting Wiza's plans to get educated (Sinyangwe, 2010). However, with the conflict chronotope in play, none of this happens and Wiza's suicide demonstrates the result of the conflict caused by the marriage conflict chronotope and the inescapability of his fate. The change brought about by the marriage conflict in this instance is different from the stability that it is supposed to restore when considered as an equilibrium chronotope. This observation means that the action-space, in the case Wiza's marriage, does not necessarily entail identical roles or transfer from one genre to another, specifically from the oral narrative to the novel.

Furthermore, the replication or linear movement of a conflict chronotope from oral narratives to the novel such as *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010), is challenged by the movement's dependency on the type of both the conflict chronotope and that of the effect it will have on a particular subject. Put succinctly, the type of image to be acted on, in this case, Wiza determines the type of conflict and effect that the chronotope will have. That is: "Whenever something happens, there is resistance. Sometimes resistance emerges in nature (forces of nature), other times from anthropomorphic elements (resistance originating from other humans)" (Keunen, 2011, p. 50). This is because a hero or heroic events in a novel are often met with various conflicts that might not necessarily be the same in every novel and oral narrative even if the hero or conflict chronotope remains the same. In fact, the forces of nature and human beings cited here might not be homogenous entities but heterogenous ones. If Wiza in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) is taken to be an image of an indigenous Zambian man's quest for identity in the midst of colonial infiltration, one can identify various chronotopes of conflict that emerge around him. We identify antagonists from his school, Kenneth Kaunda Secondary School, such as the head teacher, Mr Dasgupta and the prefect Yona that antagonise Wiza's experiences while at the school and are responsible for the events that lead to his expulsion and eventual failure to get educated. The narrator informs the reader that both Mr Dasgupta and Yona hated Wiza, and that Yona maliciously includes Wiza's name on a list of pupils that steal maize from the school field. Wiza ends up in the head teacher's office where the only thing that saves him from being expelled is his father's

plea with the head teacher. However, the next time he is not so lucky because Yona secretly follows Wiza during a Provincial Science Fair and catches him spending a night in the sick bay with a girl (Evi) from a neighbouring school. Yona notifies the head teachers from both schools and both Wiza and Evi are expelled because the act is against the rules of such events. After this, his father acts as a chronotope of conflict by insisting and making sure he gets married instead of getting educated.

However, Wiza is also an antagonist and conflict to himself. Despite all the warnings from his father and the head teacher to stay out of trouble he decides to spend the night with Evi and this becomes the source of his undoing. His fate is in this case a mixture of his own decisions and the result of the destiny arising from the actions of other people that antagonise his ambitions to get educated. The implication of this illustration on the mutability of chronotopes is twofold. Firstly, a change to the conflict chronotope or had Kocha's intervention been effected, both the effect and resultant image of Wiza would have been different. Secondly, if the antagonists or conflict chronotopes had interacted with a character lacking Wiza's propensity to get into trouble, the results of the conflict would have been different. In both cases, the change in one player would result in different images and conflict chronotopes respectively. Therefore, the various possible sources of conflict chronotopes, varied interactions and results between them and equally various images in the novel make the movement of images from oral narratives to the novel thrice complicated and not a linear continuation.

Furthermore, the similarity between two conflict chronotopes lies in the question of whether the second condition of conflict chronotope classification, which is the notion of meeting is met. This is a very important aspect in defining Wiza as an individual in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) because his fate is decided on by whether he spends the night of the concert with Evi and whether Yona the prefect follows the couple or not. In such cases, the idea of meeting or not meeting can affect a conflict chronotope's movement in replicated form from one text to another including oral narratives to the novel. This follows Bakhtin's (1981, p. 94) observation that the hero must be in "one and the same time" and "one and the same place" with the agent of change for a conflict to be effected. In the event that the two do not meet, especially in an event that the hero does not meet the conditions of meeting or showing up in that time and space, the chronotope maintains its chronotopicity (unity of time and place). Yet the difference in effect between the two situations is

important in revealing that, there is a difference between a chronotope that bears the positive sign (they met) and the one that bears the negative sign (they did not meet). This is shown in the way that all the conflict chronotopes mentioned in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) (the marriage or Wiza's misdeed with Evi) are dependent on 'meeting' or Wiza's presence in a specific place and time. For instance, if Wiza was not with Evi on that night of the concert or if Yona had not seen and followed them, there would be no incident concerning the couple and nothing to witness on Yona's part. Similarly, the marriage in the village only takes place because of Wiza's presence at the village: it had been put on hold for as long as he was away. Wiza's expulsion is necessitated by the fulfilment of the notion of 'meeting' –Yona is in the wrong place at the right time. On the contrary, had Yona not been at the place of the incident at the same time it happened, he would not have witnessed it and Wiza would not have been expelled. Therefore, the depiction of Yona as a conflict chronotope or antagonist and his effect on the events that unfold in Wiza's life, would be different depending on whether the meeting bears a negative or positive sign. The same observation can be extended to the movement of oral narrative conflict chronotopes or images from oral narratives to the novel. This is because even when used in the novel, the question of whether they bear the negative or positive sign in relation to the notion of meeting determines their similarity. As a result, oral narrative images cannot simply be viewed in a linear sense or identical sense to those in the novel.

The efficacy of a conflict chronotope has a bearing on whether an image is major or minor and this differentiates images from one another and challenges the idea that oral narrative images in the novel are a linear succession and replication of their oral narrative counterparts. This is because an image or conflict chronotope can be a major chronotope in one narrative only if it bears the positive sign of meeting on the one hand or minor in another narrative if it bears the negative sign of meeting on the other hand. This is related to the idea that "Only those images possessing strong thematic value, images that also produce an effect on the level of the plot-space can claim a place in the category of dominant chronotopes" (Keunen, 2011, p. 40). These images have a strong value or contribution to the plot owing to the fact that a meeting or an encounter took place and had significant influence on both the hero and the plot. On the contrary, if a meeting does not take place or if the result of the meeting is contrary to the themes and direction of the plot, then such a chronotope will be considered minor. If the conflict between indigenous beliefs and modernity is

taken as a theme in *Quills of desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) at the macro level of the narrative, then the conflict between Wiza's desire to get educated (quills of desire) and the pressure of the traditional marriage present a good case in which the present argument is actualised. The marriage is only a dominant chronotope or image because the condition of meeting or the marriage eventually takes place and the results are aligned to the themes of the narrative. The obvious relationship between the marriage chronotope and the theme of modernity versus indigenous tradition points to the fact that Wiza's marriage as observed in the many attempts Wiza's father, Chambuleni, makes to get his son Wiza married would not have been so important if it did not take place. Hence, the dominance and importance of the marriage to the theme of modernity versus indigenous tradition is that it symbolises the prevalence of tradition over modernity. Furthermore, the marriage results in Wiza's suicide which is not only literal suicide but also the metaphorical death of his plans to get educated and a symbol of the failure of modernity to engulf indigenous tradition. On the contrary, if the marriage did not take place, the marriage image would have to be considered minor which illustrates my assertion that the idea of minor or major chronotope is not a guaranteed status for images in the novel.

Furthermore, at plot-space level we delineate between teleological chronotopes and dialogical chronotopes, which render the suggestion that oral narrative images in the novel are simple replications of oral narratives ineffective. This is because the position and role of chronotopes in the plot designates the role and character that chronotopes will take in a given text. In fact, Keunen observes that while in the previous section the differentiation was based on chronotopes at micro level (motivic or chronotopes of action), the discussion on plot-space internal variation addresses generic chronotopes at the macro level (generic or plot-space chronotopes) of a text. The aim is to study the possible chronotopic variations that take place at this level in relation to the view that such generic chronotopes can never be the same in different texts including oral narratives and novels. In fact, Keunen (2011, p. 41) further observes that:

> teleological and dialogical constructs of imagination are closely associated with the concepts of time of two different worldviews. A plot-space that strongly accentuates the closing moment (the eschaton) traces back to judgments about a harmonious universe, whereas a plot space chronotope accentuating the deciding moments and crises of the characters (the kairos) expresses the basic experience of an unstable universe inhabited by more or less free individuals.

This means that a teleological plot-space can be considered in the same light as a simple and episodic plot because it is goal oriented and would probably include equilibrium chronotopes, which would not disturb the desire for a specific and predictable dénouement. On the contrary, the dialogical chronotope is more focused on building conflicts and on those moments that demonstrate this as opposed to resolution of the conflicts. In *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) we observe both teleological and dialogical plot-space chronotopes. Firstly, all of Wiza's different experiences are directed at the closing moment of the narrative characterised by his failed education and eventual suicide. This is because everything that happens to him such as the expulsion and the marriage push him away from education and back to his indigenous life in the village. At the same time, one realises that the narrative emphasises the crises and deciding moments that shape Wiza's fate. These include the fate deciding night he spends with Evi, his brief stay in the city and Mpulungu harbour to avoid his father and marriage, his return home, the marriage and suicide. All these points create important turning points in the plot of *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) because the decisions made at each point determine the direction the plot will go. Hence, we observe both an emphasis on the closing moment and on the deciding moments and actions, which is the main difference between teleological plots and dialogical plots in the first place. The nature of the plot-space in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) demonstrates that depending on the requirements of a narrative, a similar plot may be teleological in one case while in another dialogical. Yet, in another case, as observed in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010), a narrative may contain both teleological and dialogical plot-spaces. Owing to the nature of such variations based on placement of emphasis, generic or archetypal plot patterns cannot be considered identical even when the plot pattern is inherited from the oral narrative to the novel.

It must be noted further that the constituent action-spaces in dialogical plot-spaces function as part of the whole plot-space. Different chronotopes are defined by their relationship to the whole plot-space and not as individual autonomous entities. This means that we are no longer concerned with autonomous chronotopes from oral narratives but the plot-space chronotope of the novel as a whole. In other words,

> the dialogical relationships between the action spaces…constitute relationships between autonomous spatial-temporal constructions. Besides telling their own separate story, autonomous

action spaces also enter into dialogue with each other through their interaction with the plot space. (Keunen, 2011, p. 13)

The above suggests that a chronotope or action that is part of a narrative has a role to play in the larger umbrella of the plot and cannot be the result of a chance happening or exist as an independent entity. Furthermore, although the dialogical plot seems to place emphasis on sites of conflict, which are often separate individual constructions, they always dialogue with other chronotopes and consequently the plot-space. One can exemplify this assertion with three parallel stories in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) which are seemingly separate but are in dialogue to the point that the decisions made in the separate cases merge at some point and are paramount to the plot-space and resolution of the plot.

Both Chambuleni (Wiza's father) and Kocha's (Wiza's brother) stories, although separate, interact with and are tied to Wiza's fate and the main direction of the plot. All of Chambuleni's actions in the narrative revolve around Wiza's desire to get educated as witnessed in the initial support, sponsorship and counsel he gives his son. This is to the extent that Wiza's father saves him when he gets into trouble at school the first time. However, when Wiza gets expelled, his father withholds sponsorship in favour of getting him married. Thus, Chambuleni may be considered the head of a family and yet the position is only illustrated in relation to Wiza's story and not any of his other children. This is consistent with my view that action-spaces in this case Chambuleni's actions are congruent with the demands of the plot-space, which require that Wiza's education is cut short to give way to his marriage. Similarly, Kocha who has been studying in Europe with intentions of upgrading his studies and staying on after completing his present studies keeps postponing his return home. Unbeknown to Kocha, Wiza has been expelled from school and is awaiting his return and support concerning ambitions to get educated. Once again, although Kocha has no knowledge of it, his fate and the decisions he makes are tied to Wiza's destiny characterised by his discontinuation of education, marriage and suicide. That is why, upon his return from Europe, Kocha regrets not having come home earlier. Hence, the interrelatedness of the three separate chronotopic constructions and their relationship to the overall plot means they cannot be defined by their individual character but as part of the plot-space chronotope. In the same way when oral narrative images enter the novel and dialogue with other images, they can no longer be considered simply as replications of oral narratives or a linear continuation from oral narratives.

An image coming from oral narratives may enter into new relationships with other chronotopes in the novel. These relationships depend on the conflicts and the temporal-spatial requirements of the overall plot-space chronotope. The indication then is that merging between different chronotopes into one plot-space in the novel suggests that images are deconstructed and constructed leading to the creation of new images. Bakhtin (1981, p. 252) delineates a few possible interactions that may occur: "they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in even more complex interrelationships." This means that some chronotopes may combine to form one chronotope, others may be deposed by others while many may end up in more complicated relationships than they had before, because of decisions that are made especially by the hero. This is clearly highlighted at critical moments in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010). For instance, Yona and the head teacher Mr. Dasgupta are separately opposed to Wiza but later fight him as a united front, thus creating a new merged chronotope, and deposing their individual ones at the same time. Yona has built an individual hatred for Wiza as observed when the prefect falsely accuses Wiza of stealing from the maize field. The head teacher's hatred grows out of his earlier failure to expel Wiza for asking a question that intimidates a government minister during a ministerial visit to the school. It becomes clear that both characters are now united in their cause as shown when Yona purposefully includes Wiza on the list of maize thieves and later reports the Science Fair incident knowing too well the head teacher's inclination towards expelling Wiza. The two separate acts of hatred (two separate chronotopes) merge into one united hatred filled front (new merged chronotope) aimed at destroying Wiza. The merging demonstrates the breakdown of two individual chronotopes and the building of a new one from the pieces. The text no longer portrays a prefect working against another pupil or a head teacher against a pupil but a whole administrative system confirming my assertion that two independent images can merge in the novel for purposes of forwarding plot-space needs. Therefore, the possibility of new complex relations among chronotopes in the novel, such as Yona and the head teacher, which are dependent on the requirements of specific plots for the hero, challenges the idea that oral narrative images retain their character or classification as replications or linear continuation from oral narrative images.

It must be noted that a teleological plot's dynamism comes from different possible positions that a chronotope may have depending on the arrangement of events leading to the accomplishment of

set goals. This means that a chronotope that functions in a particular way because of its position in one text, may function differently in another text depending on its position in the new plot-space. A plot of this kind makes the chronotope function differently from one text to another because it could have occupied one position in the first text and another in a second. Consequently, it could have related differently with chronotopes coming before and after it in both cases. In this way, the teleological plot is likened to the episodic plot, which, according to Kondala (2013, p. 6), "features distinct episodes that are related to one another but can be read individually almost as stories by themselves." This affirms my supposition regarding the relation between chronotopes and others surrounding them which is dependent on specific plot arrangements. Of related importance is the dynamism and variability stemming from the episodic (individual and autonomous) nature of chronotopes in this kind of plot, which I suggest makes it possible to move them around and alter their linearity. This results in varying event sequence in teleological plots, with chronotopes which have different sequence and relation to one another.

 A consideration of *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) as a teleological plot aimed at detailing the destruction of indigenous Zambian life or tradition (characterised by Wiza's failed marriage and eventual suicide) leads to the identification of five main events sequentially ordered to fulfil this goal. The order is as follows: Wiza's expulsion, brief stay in the city, first return to the village, escape to Mpulungu harbour and the second return and marriage in the village. The arrangement and sequential relations can be easily altered in another narrative depending on the author's intentions. For instance, the order could be such that after expulsion, Wiza returns to the village and gets married but decides to go to the city in order to make a living for his wife and family. Life in the city could be characterised by a lack of fulfilment based on the hardships associated with rapid urbanisation and other economic challenges typical of life in the city. This postulation is closely linked to plots whose goal is to highlight the downside of rapid urbanisation in the years following independence and victims of unfulfilled dreams in the city such as Meja and Maina in *Kill Me Quick* (1973). Both Meja and Maina end up becoming thieves and die pauper's deaths unlike Wiza who returns to the village after failing to get a proper job. Therefore, the variation related to alterations in the order and nature of events in a teleological plot validates that plot-patterns from oral narratives do not simply progress linearly and cyclically into the novel.

The ability of a chronotope to maintain a fixed role and position in a plot is also determined by what an author emphasises and prioritises in relation to the ultimate goal of the plot. This means that if, on one hand, the emphasis is on the protagonist's actions and his fate, the plot will be arranged in such a way that the chronology of the plot follows the path of such a character (Siluonde, 2015). If, on the other hand, emphasis is on events or the character's experiences and not the character, as is the case with Wiza's experiences in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) and according to Bakhtin's (1981) adventure novel, the plot follows the chronology of the events. That is why a teleological plot is a subjective venture and renders some actions possible and others impossible (Keunen, 2011). This substantiates my idea that an author can make a conscious decision whether to include certain material, in this case to use specific locations or not, depending on genre and emphasis. The ability to place emphasis on events or space at the expense of the hero of a narrative further extrapolates the view that in such cases the space and events are considered more important than the hero. Yet, it is possible, in another narrative with a similar teleological chronotope emphasis would shift to the hero and the plot would now be considered different as a result of the alteration. In *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) emphasis is on Wiza's actions and the places or spaces where the actions take place. The setting where actions take place are also specific to particular incidents, which is why Beaton (2010) asserts that such specificity of events to a location is more important than the location that can easily be changed. For Wiza, his expulsion and the incidents that lead to it, such as the maize field incident or his incident with Evi, can only take place at a school and not any other place. The same can be observed in his traditional marriage, which is appropriately placed in the village because only then can it conform to the setting and ways of the village. There is a difference between this placement of emphasis and narratives such as Bakhtin's (1981) adventure novel and Zambian indigenous oral narratives. This is because in both forms emphasis is on events and actions and not on space and time that often relates to an extra-temporal world which does not correspond to a specific or real world but an abstract space. Hence, owing to differences in emphasis of teleological plots from different genres such as oral narratives and the novel, oral narrative plots in the novelistic genre cannot be considered simple replications of oral narrative plots.

Furthermore, a teleological plot-space can be a combination of different types of action-spaces, despite the action spaces being complicated and dynamic entities themselves. The instability and

changeability resulting from a combination of complex action spaces in a plot-space explains why images in the novel (even in the case of a linear or episodic plots) cannot be simple replications or continuation from oral narratives. In fact, rarely would you find a modern novel teleological plot-space comprising of one type of action-space (Keunen, 2011). The kind of movement of one teleological plot-space that I suggest here can be explicated better with the idea of schematic memory and memory scripts (stimuli) in memory studies.[5] Eco (1988) distinguishes among four different types of memory scripts that relate in a similar way to the diverse and dynamic nature oral narrative mnemonic images function in a new context. I focus on three memory scripts that correspond directly to my assertion on the transfer of a diverse teleological plot-space from oral narratives that contain action-spaces that relate in an equally diverse way when they enter a new context. The combination of rhetorical scripts and situational scripts in a teleological plot-space would appropriately apply to the combination of oral narrative mnemonic images or archetypal images with images or action-space chronotopes from any other narrative including other novels and how the different types of action-spaces come together in a teleological plot-space. This can be illustrated using a possible teleological plot-space that can emerge from the common post-colonial theme encompassing the urban drift of villagers in search of better jobs and life. In one indigenous oral narrative titled *The Immigrant* (Wendland, 2004), two young men leave the village to work in the mines, forsake their relatives back home, return to the village after so many years to find the village has moved, and when they ask a wizard they meet for directions to the village they are turned into pigs. Similarities can be drawn between the narrative and Wiza's escape to the city after his expulsion. Yet, one recognises that this narrative is only part of the whole plot-space in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010), which includes other actions such as life at the school and village. So not only is the teleological plot-space of the narrative translated as one of the action spaces but in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010), Wiza goes to the city not to get a job but in an attempt to squat at Kocha's friend's place awaiting his brother's return from Europe. He only seeks a job and ends up in poverty when he does not find Kocha's friend and fails to get a proper job. Therefore, the teleological plot-space of the oral narrative is different from the plot of the novel because the novel combines the plot of the narrative (now an action space) with other action spaces in the novel.

4.3.1.2.2 Variability and Uncertainty of Fictional Worlds in *Quills of Desire*

Oral narrative images in the novel cannot be a linear continuation or replication from oral narratives because different texts relate differently with the fictional 'worlds' in which they are created. Different worldviews represent different experiences and form a pattern based on this experience and thus, affecting the kind of chronotopes and images produced. As Beaton (2010, p. 74) observes **"**It is by no means certain that the same patterning of events in space and time, encountered in texts written at widely separated historical moments, represents the identical chronotope." So different authors in different periods and places define their world based on their perception of the world. The author's definition of textual worlds is also related to the subjectivity of perception and the artistic creation that is born from such a perception. This includes cases in which a particular space or 'world' is used in two different instances and texts. From a physicist perspective: "we cannot determine whether two events having taken place at two different instances of time occurred at the same place in space" (Hawking & Mlosnow, 2005, p. 38). We can use the village worldview represented by Wiza's home village to form the premise on which I base the view that oral narrative worldviews are not the same as those found in the novel. In many oral narratives, as explicated in Bakhtin's (1981) folklore chronotope, the village is characterised by an idyllic worldview in which the villagers abide by a closed set or patterns of experience. These include a man's journey from childhood, initiation into adulthood and the last stage of becoming a man characterised by marriage. This would be the common worldview construct of pre-colonial indigenous Zambian village in novels such as *Before Dawn* (Masiye, 1970) and indigenous oral narratives such as Vyas (1969) collection entitled Folktales of Zambia. However, for Wiza's home village, the outlook and actions in it are different because it represents a different temporal or historical moment. This is shown in Wiza's intention to abide by different rules as witnessed in his desire to get educated and get married by means of a western white wedding as opposed to following indigenous tradition. The worldview and actions portrayed here are no longer idyllic but a combination of indigenous life and modernity characterised by Chambuleni's aim to educate his children while at the same time wanting them to abide by village rules. As a result, a chronotope from an oral narrative representing a different worldview cannot interact in the same way with a different worldview in the novel and so cannot be considered an exact copy or linear continuation of its predecessor in the oral narrative.

In addition, oral narrative images are concerned with closed space worldviews, while novels are mostly not. This is because modern novels are no longer restricted to closed worlds but include other spaces in which actions take place. As Keunen (2011, p. 74) observes, "In modern times new images of the fictional world are created. Heroes and heroines cease to be defined by an artificially closed world because the fixed moral and social codes in folklore and urban bourgeois become relative." This is due to the fact that the world of the novel and the real modern world is no longer limited to static and isolated imaginaries of any locale (Bhabha, 2004). Thus, the novel, is no longer restricted to the rules of oral narratives, which are motivated by the need to maintain the idyll of the village and the need to focus on a specific entity that would make the space mnemonically apt for the oral medium. One is also reminded of the timeless but spatially limited mythical worldview whose representation in oral narratives is related to Cicero's memory of places, which defines mnemonically strong images as those that fix the mind's eyes on imaginary locations or worlds with a fixed order that makes them easy to recall (Yates, 1966). On the contrary, the need for a closed space is not a necessity because its written medium does not demand mnemonic strength of images.

It should also be noted that, the modern world often represented in novels is described by many different experiences. We firstly observe the connectedness and open nature of worldview experiences in Wiza's movements in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010), which are not limited to a fixed space. It is narrated that he moves from his home village to school in Chinsali District, the city (Lusaka) and back to the village. His experiences are also defined differently depending on where he is at a particular time. This is evidenced by the fact that the text does not only define his failure by the marriage, which spells failure by village standards, but also recognises his academic failure that represents failure by the standards of a different worldview. This is not often the case in oral narratives, which often define a character in terms of the primary space or worldview represented and any interaction with other spaces or worldviews would not be essential to the definition or wellbeing of the hero. For instance, in the earlier example of the oral narrative entitled *The Immigrants* (2013), the narrative defines the two young men and their actions with focus on the fact that they neglected their home village and on what happens when they return from the city but not on their experiences in the city. On the contrary, Wiza's failure represented by his suicide is both a failure of the marriage (tradition) and his education (modernity). At another level, while

the worldview in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) is represented by a combination of village and city life, in another modern novel the combination might not be the same. Hence, the opening up of worldview space in the novel introduces complexity and diversity in the imaginary worldview to the extent that the world represented in the novel cannot be a simple replication or transfer from oral narratives.

The complexity that arises from opening up space and widening the worldview portrayed in a narrative necessitates the changeability of an image. When an image moves beyond the boundaries of their own world they are exposed to new stimulants and new interactions and the results of these interactions differ from the mundane character related to repeated interaction in the same world. In view of this, "the space in which meetings occur must be an open space where the time of chance can unfold" (Keunen, 2011, p. 51). Clearly, this space must be situated outside the isolated space of the equilibrium chronotope. This is because an open space makes the hero's movements seamless and exposes him or her (as an image) to indefinite, diverse possible interaction or encounters and equally various possible alterations to the structure of the image. It is because various modern novels tend to open up the worldview of the character that they often stage round characters and not the static characters often found in oral narratives. For instance, it is clear in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) that the mutability of Wiza lies in his movements that are not limited to the confines of one environment or world such as the village. The only reason Wiza's village mind-set on the definition of a man (related to getting married according to tradition) changes is because he has tasted life in the city and education. As a result, he has ambitions to get educated and become an engineer, unlike his younger brother who is resigned to the village life and routine of hunting, farming and fishing. Besides this, Wiza dreams of getting married to Evi in a similar way to the western wedding of Kocha's friend which he once attended in the city. This change in perception would not be possible had he stayed in the village and not been exposed to the outside world. It must be noted that here the hero's quest or search for identity takes Wiza outside the confines of the village and when he returns he is a changed man, as observed in his attitude towards the marriage and eventual suicide. On the contrary, if the hero's quest takes them outside their usual world and experiences in most oral narratives, they return home having learnt lessons but these lessons do not change them. If they do, the hero would be considered an outcast and this emphasises the closure and desire to remain static related to oral narratives. As a result,

the oral narrative image in the novel cannot be considered a replication or linear continuation of an oral narrative image because of the changeability and instability of an image related to the novel's opening up of worldview space.

Furthermore, classification and perception of worldview in a text is subjective and can vary from one person to another. This is because such classifications are subject to an author and readers' pre-knowledge that determine which worldview among many others in a text make an impression on an individual (Jedowski, 2001; Bankhan, 2006). This is in full cognisance of the view that the reader's focus on a specific worldview is mainly influenced by the author's point of view and emphasis on the hero's worldview and experiences. The relativity related to classification of worldview results in unstable and unsettling definition of the worldview in novels. It is for this reason that Keunen (2011, p. 9) observes that "Spaces, in other words, are far from absolute in the reality of imagination. Relative to the action, the movements of the principal character, and other narrative processes such as natural disasters or nonhuman characters, we can observe the creation of relative spaces. This means that even if someone used an oral narrative worldview in the novel, it would be different because other spaces may emerge while others may be overshadowed depending on different perceptions and focus. For instance, although Wiza's worldview in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) is not restricted to a particular space and experience (the spaces include school, the city and the village), other relative worldviews are still present and must not be ignored. Kocha's life in the United Kingdom where he is schooling, Evi's life and experiences in Kitwe and his other friends' worldview shaped by their experiences, include the other spaces that are present but marginalised in the text. Therefore, the observation that *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) focuses on the worldview of the hero over other worldviews present, is consistent with my argument that worldview classification depends on what the author chooses to emphasis. Yet, readers that are familiar with other worldviews such as life in the United Kingdom or Kitwe would definitely take note of the other worldviews in the text. This means that worldview chronotopes in the novel are always relative and unstable and can never totally refer to any other particular space including those from oral narratives.

Finally, oral narrative images in the novel, in this case worldviews, cannot be considered exact copies or replications of oral narrative images because different worldviews in the novel relate in varied ways with time and space. The passage of time influences the physical and experiential

aspects of space (both fictional and real spaces) and so the worldview also changes. The point I wish to make here is directed at challenging the idea that space, and by extension the worldview, remains static even when time changes and this is the premise on which the idea of linearity from oral narrative worldview spaces to the novel is based. Bakhtin (1981, p. 250) ascertains that in many texts, "thanks to spatial descriptions, time becomes 'palpable and visible' and narrative events become concrete because this spatial increase in density and concreteness of time-markers – the time of human life or historical time – that occurs within well delineated spatial areas the chronotopes becomes a driving marker of the plot". This means that we are only able to observe the passage of time, which is itself an abstract concept because space makes it visible to us through certain aspects, images and worldviews that act as 'time markers.' These markers allow us to assert that we are dealing with different fictional representations (worldviews) of different temporal moments in the real world. In *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) the concept of time markers and their relation to dynamism in the novel is reflected in the belief in the power of spirits and charms over people's destiny. The idea of visiting shrines and using charms for protection, hunting, witch hunting and seeking counsel from spirits is often related to worldviews representing indigenous Zambian life and tradition, especially in the villages (Luangala, 1991; Mulaisho, 2007). This is a common occurrence in many indigenous Zambian oral narratives seeking to portray the idyllic worldview of indigenous Zambia (Cancel, 2013; Mwelwa, 2016).

Nevertheless, the worldview and temporal marker of indigenous Zambia depicted in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) is exchanged for one that demonstrates temporal change when Wiza visits the shrine to get help for an exam. This is reflected in the statement: "On the day before the beginning of the final primary school-leaving examinations he had bravely gone alone to the home of Kuzuke, the god of prosperity and the future" (Sinyangwe, 2010, p. 5). Therefore, the fact that Wiza visits the shrine for guidance in the exam, instead of visiting it for purposes associated with indigenous worldviews, reflects a different temporal moment signified by the education aspect. In other words, time is made flesh in this worldview or representation of experience, while validating that the traditional medicine is the same and yet time has changed as observed in its application to education. Hence, education acts as a time marker and demonstrates that the chronotope or worldview is no longer the same. The idea of time markers and their role in concretising time or temporal moments draws one to the conclusion that worldview chronotopes, and by extension

images from one genre to the other, in this case oral narratives, are not the same and do not show mnemonic consistency or linearity from oral narratives to the novel.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter argued that oral narrative images in the novel cannot be considered simple replications and descendants of oral texts because they comprise or are made up of unstable time and space (chronotopes) relations. The basis for the discourse on linearity is on the assumption that time and representations of time changes and space remains static. On the contrary, my argument is that the chronotope "is in itself a concept characterised by flexibility, variability and mutability" (Gainser, et al., 2006, p. 14). Hence, I unpacked this fluid movement of images from oral narratives to the novel using images in *Tongue of the Dumb* (Mulaisho, 2007) (a historical novel) to show that the novel is made up of polysystems comprised of different images or representations of time and place from different sources, which interact in different ways and alter oral narrative images. In addition, I argued that the Bergsonian (2009) idea of pure duration and Ricoeur's (1984) idea of the threefold mimesis illustrates the non-linear transmutability of images from pre-knowledge, re-imaging of this merged with someone's perception in the text and lastly release of the altered image into the world. Secondly, I used images in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) to argue that images or chronotopes in the novel comprise of different internal levels of artistic creation that relate in diverse ways and result in chronotopes that are never identical.

It was observed that polysystems and pure duration alter the stability of chronotopic relations in the novel. They indeed affect synchronic and diachronic relations and the frozen movement of images from one point to another. As a result, I observed, in the analysis of *Tongue of the Dumb* (2007) that, the merging of different worldviews (Bakhtin, 1981), such as the idyll (Mpona village), with the everyday adventure aspects of colonial Zambia (a mixture of the idyll and the missionaries and educations and western health care) creates a new chronotope. This new chronotope is different from the one in oral narratives in the same epoch or synchronic period that might represent a purely idyll village. This also affects diachronic relations because, on the one hand, the conflicts and clashes one observes in *Tongue of the Dumb* (2007) between conservative and new ideas are appropriate for a novel depicting the colonial period. On the other hand, such conflicts would not exist in a novel depicting a more contemporary period or village. It was further observed that a chronotope which first enters the novel as a conflict chronotope, based on pre-

knowledge of the colonial context, is staged (based on perception) in the novel as one that converts to a reconciliation of new and old beliefs in the novel. This then, is the image that re-enters the world as one relating pre-knowledge (image of affection) and the world. Consequently, the fact that these are few of the many possible interactions and results (of interaction between images of affection and images of action) means that images from oral narratives can be altered in indefinite ways and as such cannot claim linear and sole ancestry over the novel.

Furthermore, the discussion of different inter and intra levels of artistic construction in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010) revealed that there are many variants of space-time relations that make the idea of linearity from oral narratives to the novel a capricious undertaking. This is because different levels have varying influences, interactions and equally varied results of such interactions. Thus, the chapter noted that two different worldviews, such as the village, on one hand, and the town or city, on the other hand, have different effects on Wiza, as an action space chronotope or level. The protagonist's desire to get educated and have a white wedding arise from his experience and exposure to school and town life, while the call for him to get married by the standards of the village and settle in the ways of the village is related to the worldview of the village. It was noted that there are many possible action-spaces, plot-spaces and worldviews that exist, hence, so many alternatives of images can take part in the construction of a chronotope. This is evidenced by different types of action-spaces (conflict and equilibrium), plot-spaces (teleological and dialogical) and worldviews that I identified in *Quills of Desire* (Sinyangwe, 2010). Of note is how the marriage chronotope can function as a conflict chronotope and equilibrium on the one hand, when it antagonises Wiza's ambitions to get educated, and equilibrium, on the other hand, when it functions as a means to maintain the idyll of the village threatened by Wiza's ambitions.

Lastly, this chapter demonstrated that an analysis of the novel, which ends with an identification of similar themes and motifs between oral narratives and the novel and gives this as a reason for linearity and ancestry of novels from oral narratives is flawed. Such an analysis neglects the most important question on why certain images are part of a genre. As Bakhtinian studies suggest: "we must have a sound grasp of the strategies of imagination that exist in a given period" (Keunen, 2011, p. 12). Therefore, while certain images, such as the village chronotope, may appear in both oral narratives and the novel, one must not simply assume that the chronotope symbolises the idyll.

One must instead, understand the temporal and spatial realities and their implications, as they may not be the same in both genres. The possible influence that the passage of time, perception and internal construction have on the chronotopic specificity and outlook of different images indicates that even when oral narrative mnemonic images are used in the novel, they no longer have identical character.

Endnotes

[1] The idea of a historical novel here is based on Bakhtin's (1981) view of a narrative, which is set and portrays events as something out of the past and not contemporary in any sense.

[2] The Greek adventure novel's main emphasis is on the adventure and heroic deeds of the hero, while the everyday adventure novel, which includes both adventure the everyday life of characters includes the day by day events of that past including biographical past, and the idyllic chronotope relating s to the folkloric world and indigenous past.

[3] Generic chronotopes refer to the overall worldview of the text and can be contrasted with motivic chronotopes, which refer to internal chronotopes in the text such as motifs, symbols and themes.

[4] I use Keunen's (2011) delineation of three levels of chronotopic construction (plot-space, action-space and worldview) to develop my argument that chronotopic relations and those between different images from oral narratives to the novel are complicated by diverse interactions among the levels of construction. I argue further that oral narrative mnemonic images are not pure ancestors of the novel.

[5] Eco (1988) relates the spontaneous connection between pre-literary knowledge (chronotopes from earlier genres) one gets or realises upon facing a new literary text with the Schematic memory from memory studies. According to schematic memory, the mention or exposure to a certain word or script we know in a new context will bring to remembrance a whole narrative or description of what it is related to in our minds from previous experience.

Chapter Five: 'In-between but outside': Unstable Images in *Echoes of Betrayal* and *Ticklish Sensation*[1]

5.1 Introduction

In the present chapter I suggest that signs (images) in the Zambian novel in English are articulated in an undefinable space between signifier and signified but also outside the dichotomy of theoretical (signifier/signified) signification. This liberates signs in the novel from the confines of sedimentation and fixity that subscription to an oral narrative absolute signified presupposes. The negritude idea of black consciousness (Onwumere & Egbulonu, 2014) and arguments for the continuity of African indigenous culture (Chinweizu, et al., 1985; waThiongo, 1986) that place emphasis on the continuity of art forms (oral narratives) propagate such fixity. In reality, novelistic signs are caught up in an eternal attempt to articulate an abstract signified and resulting in perpetual oscillation 'in-between' potential signifier and intangible signified (Bhabha, 1994; 2004). This entails that the sign's meaning must be sought in a site outside or beyond (Sartre, 1964; Barthes, 2001) the confines of dichotomised signification which is restricted to theory –abstract signifier and signified (a sound mark and a concept) (Allen, 2003). On the contrary, one likens the novel to the post-structuralist text whereby:

> networks are many and interact without one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one. (Barthes, 1987)

I similarly argue that signs in Zambian novels such as Namutowe's (2019) *Echoes of Betrayal* and Phiri's (1994) *Ticklish Sensation* are articulated outside the confines of any authoritative discourse that presupposes absolute signifier and signified relationships. This applies to the assumption that the novel's images solely signify oral narratives. The sign in the novel is not located on either the signifier or signified but a borderline place that is not a certain and defined intermediary between the two binaries. Furthermore, other signifiers and sites of signification are always emerging, which suggests that signification in the novel only operates at signifier level (Barthes, 1985) and is characterised by diversity in the absence of a tangible signified. The sign is also constantly being revised and reproduced because every new encounter, as is the case with

Jojo's different experiences of the 'ticklish sensation' (Phiri, 1994), is subjective and adds a new dimension to the sign. This indicates that the sign is located in an unhomely (and always haunted) space related to the idea of not 'being in' a definite and fixed space one can identify with as home (Heidegger, 1962) –in the same way that images in the novel cannot claim a fixed form. As a result, the sign is always an anticipation because both signifier and signified are never grasped in its oscillation and the absence of complete signification. I utilise the sign of marriage in Namutowe's (2019) *Echoes of Betrayal* to describe the sign as an unstable intermediary which is characterised by partiality, ambivalence and unhomeliness without closure. Furthermore, I employ Jojo's persuit of the 'ticklish sensation' in Phiri's (1994) *Ticklish Sensation* to discuss the contradiction between theory and practice and how the sign must be viewed as an object of subjective experience that is constantly under revision and belongs to an unstable in-between space which is beyond binaries of signifier /signified. In doing so, I justify my disregard for the claim that images in the novel are perfect signifiers and linear descendants of oral narratives, as I argue that such a mythicised idea bears no resemblance to the unstable in-betweeness of signs in the novel.

I mainly utilise Bhabha's (1994; 2004) concept of the 'third space' to discuss my view that the confinement of signs (images) to absolute signifier and signified relations is challenged by unstable ('in-between but outside') signs in the novel. Of particular interest is Bhabha's (1994; 2004) idea of cultures coming together and instead of forming a new form in which the two can easily be identified as individual pure cultures, the hybrid becomes an indefinite third space. According to Bhabha (1991, p. 211)

> The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me [him] is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. The third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.

 Hence, the fact that the product of hybridity cannot be traced to 'original moments' is pertinent to my observation in this chapter that images in the novel cannot be tied to an oral narrative signified. Instead, the emergence of other positions results not in a neat intermediary between two original points but a back and forth oscillation between near-resemblance and near difference to the abstract signifier and signified (original moments). The emergence of this back and forth 'third space' –

neither one nor the second space – denotes a space (image in the novel) that is always haunted by other emerging signs and characterised by the uncanny and unhomeliness because it is not a distinct homely space to which we can designate absoluteness of form. These other signs form layers of signification and echo Genette (1980) and Bal's (2009) idea of narrative embedding characterised as stories within stories which divert from the primary narrative by following paths different from the primary fabula.

Furthermore, the idea of other spaces emerging and Bhabha's (1991; 1994; 2004) preference of hybridisation to hybridity (as process rather than a fixed entity) is pertinent to my view that the sign is a moving liminal borderline that is under constant revision and production. This inadvertently appeals to subjectivity and relates to the post-structuralist idea of textuality, which presupposes that a text is subjective, and only exists "when it is produced by the new reader" (Allen, 2003, p. 83). This indicates that the sign is revised by every new encounter with different people and different places and this discredits the idea of universal signs. In addition, the idea of absolute signification is annulled as there are more than one signifiers emerging in 'the third space' and the consequent on-going revision. This evokes Baudrillard's (1988) idea of a simulacrum in which all the layers of emerging signifiers only offer surface meaning unrelated to the assumed signified, because the signified does not exist. Hence, such ambivalence, multi-layeredness and mutability characterising 'the third space' (or 'in-between but outside') (Sartre, 1964; Barthes, 2001; Bhabha, 2004)cannot promise perfect signification in which signs in the novel signify absolute oral narrative mnemonic images.

Therefore, in this chapter, I suggest that literal and figurative images in the novel are characterised by 'unstable in-betweeness' – anything that emerges after linearity theory's failure to map itself onto reality and the novel's signs. This is because there is often no relationship between the theoretical articulation of the absolute signifier and signified and actual articulation of the sign in the novel. This is akin to the structuralist relationship between signifier and signified, which is arbitrary and not related to any real object in the real world. Instead, what is produced in reality is something that resembles the signified but is different because it was never intended in the first place. The complexity of the in-between space is illustrated by Bhabha's (1994, p. 86) description of colonial governments' attempt to translate subjects resulting in ambivalence: "Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed recognizable…as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but

not quite. Which is to say that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence." Hence, the translation process is ambivalent from the beginning because it creates a subject in whom one recognises the resemblance to colonial authority but at the same time identifies that it is different (Viswanathan, 2003). The subject's identity is therefore a constant alternation between "mimicry – a difference that is almost nothing but not quite to menace – a difference that is almost total but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 91). This applies to signs in the novel where what emerges in place of the desired signified is something that simultaneously stimulates hope of the signified (at times when it resembles the signified) and threatens articulation of the signified (when something different from the signified emerges). We observe this controversy in Namutowe's (2019) *Echoes of Betrayal* where the sign of marriage fails to be a pure intermediary between signifier (actual marriage) and signified (perfect marriage) because of constant alternation between resemblance to perfection and moments when challenges, such as adultery, poor communication and barrenness, rise to the surface. Similarly, the articulation of the absolute signified of the 'ticklish sensation'–a metaphor for the feeling one gets when they touch a woman's breasts in Phiri's (1994) *Ticklish Sensation* – is challenged by the difference between theory and practice. This is because Jojo's experiences with different girls scatters the sign away from the signified and threatens stability and existence of the signified 'ticklish sensation.' The mobile space, which allows anything other than the intended signified to emerge, is thus, not a reliable signifier of any signified including oral narratives.

Furthermore, I discuss the idea that the battle to signify purely involves a back and forth tag of war whereby the sign's move in the direction of the signified yields a pull in a different direction by different signifiers. This is because the articulation of a sign or signifier that is a complete and perfect match for a signified is constantly interrupted by difference that keeps permeating the surface of the sign. Particularly, signification keeps on returning but to something different from the intended signifier each time. This leads to my assertion that new spaces continue to interrupt signification of an absolute signified and one must be open to the fact that new spaces will always emerge while the sign is articulated (Lawrence, 2016). This is primarily due to other signs haunting other signs – the movement of the sign moves towards the signified which results in it being obstructed by unwanted or uncanny aspects that emerge. I use the image of marriage in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) to examine how images in the novel are haunted by past affairs and

other unwanted issues that prevent them from being perfect marriages or definite signifier (images in the novel) signified articulation (indigenous oral narratives). The result is ambivalent and unhomely marriages, which reveal that the idea of perfect marriage continues to be an anticipation that is never achieved. Furthermore, the signified and signification is dismissed because of the different signifiers and consequent signification processes that emerge when a sign is articulated. This is observed in Jojo's search for the 'ticklish sensation', which in reality is scattered into many directions of interpretation that are different from the assumed absolute signified of the 'ticklish sensation'. It must be noted that the text is a "multidimensional space" (Barthes, 1986, p. 52) where "everything is to be disentangled, but nothing deciphered" (p. 53). In this case what emerges as in-betweeness are layers of illusions (of the signified) that hide the fact that the absolute signified cannot be deciphered. Therefore, signs in the novel must be viewed as unstable signs incapable of signifying oral narratives because they are articulated in an unstable in-between space characterised by ambivalence, illusions, and dismissal of the signified.

Hence, I suggest that, the sign must be considered beyond the confines of absolute signification and considered as subjective, constantly on the move and under revision. This is because, as the sign moves from the direction of absolute signified to actual signifier, it always bears and leaves its mark on any surface encountered along the way. This is envisioned in a multi-faced sculpture made to move around on the back of a truck: "The Sculpture, received the fleeting image reflected on its many angled surfaces and could not hold them steady or still for any duration because the truck was on the move" (Shu-mei-Shih, 2018, p. 217). The sculpture is constantly on the move because of the truck that is moving and cannot hold on to any passing image in a similar way to signification of the sign, which cannot hold on to a single signifier it encounters because it is on the move. This also means that the sign is constantly being revised as it moves from one point of signification to the other but the modification is on-going because the sign cannot stay in the same position long enough to be grounded. The implication here is that one cannot limit the new possibilities that lie in store for signification. In addition, in a similar way to the sculpture that receives a different 'fleeting image' from every place it passes, I contend that an articulation of the sign must be viewed as a perpetual revision exercise – flexible and dependent on a particular encounter the sign has at different times. To this end, I examine the inability of marriages in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) to provide closure concerning the definition of perfect marriage

and the 'ticklish sensation' in *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) which is never articulated in the text even after Jojo thinks he has eventually located it in his wife. Hence, the sign in the novel, which is located beyond signification where absolute signification ceases, cannot be involved in signification where it signifies oral narratives.

5.2 *Echoes of Betrayal*

The novel describes the experiences of three couples and particularly, how they grapple with infidelity, incompatibility and betrayal in their marriages. The first couple, Susan and Melvin struggle to save their marriage after thirteen years of a marriage characterised by public display of happiness and perfection. Yet, Melvin has been adulterous with different women for most of this marriage. He finally repents and makes amends but discovers that the behaviour had pushed his wife (Susan) into an affair with another married man, Isaac two years prior. The second couple, Isaac and Hilary's marriage becomes turbulent when the couple are drawn apart by their failure to bear children. This pushes Isaac into an affair with Susan that provides solace from both their crumbling marriages. When Isaac eventually breaks off the affair and reconciles with Hilary, the two (Isaac and Hilary) fail to redeem their marriage and go separate ways. The third couple, Hilda and Bernard have an idea their marriage will not work from the start but still get married. They continue to tolerate each other even after realising their incompatibility. In addition, their relationship before and during the marriage is marred by Bernard's relationship with his ex-girlfriend Nomsa. Hilda ends up initiating an affair with Nomsa's husband Derek out of revenge and eventually settles down with him after ending her marriage. Nomsa ends up engaged to Isaac in the long run.

5.2.1 Marriage and Imperfect Intermediaries in *Echoes of Betrayal*

In this sub-section, I discuss how insistence on absolute signification of a perfect heterosexual marriage in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) reveals instability underneath. This is because the attempt to draw attention to the authorised version of marriage as a signified that is nowhere articulated in the novel exposes spaces underneath that would otherwise be concealed by fixation on a perfect image of marriage. Such perfection is impossible because, as Bhabha (2004) observes, the sign and in this case marriage is never a pure hybrid (perfect and imperfect marriage) and consequently never a perfect intermediary (compromise between perfect and imperfect marriage) between the constituent parts. Instead, we observe a perpetual back and forth oscillation between

parent signs (perfect and imperfect marriage), because of interruptions in the sign's (marriage) articulation in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019). On the one hand, we witness the articulation of the authorised perfect marriage, exemplified by Melvin and Susan's marriage in times when things seem to be superficially working out. For thirteen years Susan and her husband experience what Susan terms an illusion of a happy marriage characterised by an outward appearance of happiness in public places such as the church. This includes the period when Melvin repents from his adulterous ways and makes conscious efforts to revive the marriage. On the other hand, imperfection slips through the cracks of Susan and Melvin's marriage because Melvin has been adulterous and uncommunicative to his wife throughout the thirteen years of a seemingly happy marriage. Furthermore, no sooner has Melvin repented or shown signs of repentance and moved in the direction of a happy marriage than Susan confesses about an affair she had two years prior "when things… [were] going perfectly well in your marriage" (Namutowe, 2019, p. 2). The two situations and the continued back and forth movements between almost perfect (outwardly perfect but marred by Melvin's adultery) and almost imperfect (when Melvin repents but is disrupted by Susan's confession) demonstrate how signs in the novel do not signify a definite signified. Yet, the vacillation is a perpetual alternation between near resemblance to a perfect marriage (mimicry) and near difference or closer to imperfect marriage (menace) (Bhabha, 1994) because the sign always bears traces of other sign(s). The absence of an absolute signification of a perfect or imperfect marriage threatens the idea of stable signs in the novel and their ability to reliably signify anything including oral narratives. What emerges is an unstable in-between space where signification moves back and forth between the two impure signs – perfect and imperfect marriage (each marred by the other) without absolute definition. Hence, I consider this undefined in-between space as an unhomely borderline space where the other signs always emerge to disrupt the potential stability of the sign.

The instability of signs in the novel and the resultant back and forth status of marriage in this case stems from the fact that both signifier and signified within the sign are internally split entities. An internally split sign of this nature is incapable of definite identity of any absolute entity including oral narrative signified. This is pertinent to my argument that images in the novel are unstable leading to a variation between orality and versions of its after-life. The abstract first level of signification (SIGNIFIED) in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) involves the perfect

heterosexual marriage as signifier[1] (nominally) and the signified[1] (mental concept). Then the second level signification (SIGNIFIER) involves the actual marriage (signifier[2]) which is characterised by the unstable in-betweeness (signified[2]) I previously discussed as marked by the alternation between perfection and imperfection related to Melvin and Susan's marriage. There is often contradiction between the two levels of signification and in both cases the signified does not exist – abstract in level one and undefined in level two. This kind of signification is evident in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) where failure by the SIGNIFIER of marriage to articulate the SIGNIFIED (absolute perfect marriage) in the text leads to Melvin and Susan's pretence that they have a perfect marriage to the outside. Yet, the marriage inadvertently exhibits imperfect traits such as Melvin's adultery and Susan's affair at the same time. Hence, the marriage as a SIGNIFIER oscillates back and forth between perfection, when the couple is in public and imperfection, when the couple is alone and face the reality of Melvin's adultery. Furthermore, when Melvin repents and the marriage seems to be heading in the direction of perfection, Susan confesses that she had an affair. The confession swings the marriage back to imperfection. It should be underscored that the sign of Melvin and Susan's marriage (SIGNIFIER) falls into an obscure place of neither here nor there. This is because the marriage cannot be clearly defined as either perfect or imperfect by virtue of perpetually alternating between the two opposite poles. This means that the SIGNIFIER – actual marriage (signifier[2]) signifies unstable in-betweeness characterised by back and forth movements between perfection and imperfection (signified[2]). The deference between the internal composition (signifier and signified) of the SIGNIFIER in level two and the SIGNIFIED (perfect marriage or signifier[1] and signified[1]) in level one demonstrate the complexity related to ascribing an absolute signified to signs in the novel. In other words, while one may expect to identify an image of marriage in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) that matches the signification in level one, one instead discovers that the sign is articulated in an ambiguous manner as is the case with Susan and Melvin's marriage. Therefore, the failure of the actual marriage (which exhibits different signification from the SIGNIFIED) to signify the ideal SIGNIFIED (with its own ideal signification) resulting in unstable in-betweeness means the sign in the novel cannot be stable. For this reason, the images in the novel cannot be grounded enough to signify anything tangible and this includes oral narrative mnemonic images.

Henceforth, the sign of marriage in the novel (Namutowe, 2019) must be read as a shaky borderline existence because in its unstable position it is indicative of a non-static and double-edged borderline experience. This is the case with Isaac and Susan who are involved in an affair and cannot consequently claim to fully identify with their individual marriages as absolute pure or perfect entities. Similarly, their affair cannot be considered pure because the two characters drift towards a love affair but do not denounce their marriages. As such, the sign of marriage can neither promise sustainable identity for itself nor absolute entities on either side. Susan and Isaac first meet at a supermarket after which their marital problems (Susan's adulterous husband and Isaac's nagging wife) becomes the basis on which an affair is founded. Yet, they do not define their relationship as a love affair even when they continue to find solace and are aware of their feelings for each other. The lack of certainty related to Susan and Isaac's marriages as a result of them being simultaneously in the affair and marriage draws me to the suggestion that we must settle for a sign's identity that accounts for this obscure double-space. That is "a contentious internal liminality providing a space from which to speak both of, and as… the exilic, the marginal and emergent" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 149). Such an approach helps to explain aspects of representation in the novel that have more than one context influencing them. This is a preferable critical analytical approach to the literary text than fixation on one context such as oral narrative influence which inhibits the illumination of other contexts present in the novel. Illustratively, Susan and Isaac may be considered to have left the marriage, while still bearing the identity of marriage. In addition, by being concurrently in the marriage and the affair, they belong to a borderline or marginal space between the two yet the drift towards the affair signifies emergence of a new aspect of the sign of marriage. This complexity indicates that attempts to assign stable identity to either the marriage or the affair contrary to unstable in-betweeness entails alienating the actual articulation of marriage (characterised by being simultaneously inside and outside the marriage) from itself (Bryne, 2009). Therefore, the definition of marriage and the affair between Susan and Isaac in *Echoes of betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) must consider that both signs emerge in an unstable and non-static boundary. This is because the individuals involved keep oscillating back and forth between the marriage and the affair and are consequently unable to define themselves completely in the affair or the marriage. Hence, there is no pure entity either in the space where Susan or Isaac's marriage should be or where their affair should be. The sign of marriage cannot be defined as a stable boundary (between marriage and the affair) or as a pure marriage or affair. This already annuls any potential identity

there may be because the sign of marriage and by extension images in the novel cannot be both inside (the confines of oral narrative reference) and outside (referring to other things such as the affair) at the same time.

One also discovers an element of being 'almost in' the marriage and 'almost in another relationship' that characterises marriage in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) as opposed to an absolute destination. One can point out the moments when Susan is at home with her family or when Isaac reconciles with his wife Hilary while still in the affair. Both characters fail to be fully present in their individual marriages because they cannot be completely exiled from the affair still active at the time. Susan and Isaac live on the borders of their marriages by having the affair but also on the borderline of their relationship because they cannot commit fully to the affair as a result of the marriage. Consequently, the two can only be identified by this 'almost not in the marriage' and 'almost not in another relationship' that they find themselves in. The indefiniteness typical of the borderline is noted in Isaac's statement when he and Susan finally face the implication of their relationship: "I think it's a sign that we have ventured into a territory we shouldn't. It is not right for both of us to have such feelings for each other" (Namutowe, 2019, p. 34). This is because their extra-marital relationship and being in two places at once, like the border and exilic condition (Bhabha, 2004), shows that both characters are no longer located in either of both places, and the definite signification ceases. Furthermore, the couple cannot definitely identify themselves in the in-between borderline space because they cannot be in two places at the same time. The space cannot be identified as a separate entity which promises either a distinct marriage or affair on both sides. Thus, the indefiniteness related to this borderline place means the sign cannot signify anything concrete or refer to oral narratives because it has no stable meaning.

In addition, the borderline occupied by the sign can never be a definite entity because it is always only a metonymy of presence. This means that any sign in the novel can only be considered as a partial presence of the signified (including those from oral narrative) but never the whole. The situation is akin to the metonymic existence of the couples in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) who are split into two between their marriages and extra-marital affairs because of the fact that they cannot be in both places at the same time. This also means that their presence in one of the two places can only be a partial presence. The sign then must be classified as "always partially split – it makes present something that is absent – and temporarily deferred…The image is at once

a metaphoric substitution, an illusion of presence, and by the same token a metonym, a sign of its absence and loss" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 51). This kind of partiality is especially demonstrated in Susan and Hilda whose sexual relations with their husbands are characterised by the partial and inadvertent articulation of their extra-marital affairs. The novel portrays how Susan only manages to be intimate with her husband, Melvin by imagining her lover Isaac. She confesses that "I might not have actually slept with Isaac but in my head, and through my husband, I vividly had intercourse with him" (Namutowe, 2019, pp. 34-35). Here we observe how Susan makes her affair present in a space where it is absent. The present sexual encounter between Susan and her husband Melvin is split in two –the physical act taking place on the one hand and the imagined sexual act between Susan and Isaac on the other hand. Although one is present and the other absent, the actual one makes the present one the imagined one, which is not spatially and temporally present.

In another case, Hilda's husband, Bernard, confesses that "every time that [sex] happened, Hilda would just turn around to make her body available for me but she would not take an active part in it" (Namutowe, 2019, p. 202). The lack of intimate presence we witness in Hilda is a metaphor that indicates the part (Hilda's emotional attachment to Dereck, her lover) that is not there. Nevertheless, the presence of Isaac or Dereck would not make the sexual experience complete in both cases. This is because, Susan and Hilda cannot be in both the marriage and the affair at the same time. The absence observed in the sexual encounters in this and the above-noted marriage does not reflect the absence of a part that has potential to complete the sign. Rather, it demonstrates the impossibility of filling the absence created by the part of the sign that is not present and condemns the sign to eternal partial presence. Therefore, the perpetual partial presence of the sign means it can never signify anything completely. The suggestion is that we steer away from the absolute signification that linearity from oral narratives to the novel demands, owing to the metonymic status of the sign in the novel.

The idea that the sign is never a complete product suggests that the sign is always haunted by the other part that is needed to complete it but always absent. Put succinctly, the sign in the novel only signifies in part while always bearing the presence of other signs, whether it is taken as a pure representative of oral narratives or any absolute signified. At the same time, a disavowal of the 'other signs' witnesses their unauthorised permeation through the cracks as something missing. Bhabha (1994) terms this haunting of other places by other places, the return of the uncanny or

unwanted. Such a return of the unwanted is observed in the way Bernard's ex-girlfriend Nomsa reappears in his life and disrupts his marriage to Hilda. This is similar to Bhabha's (1994, p. 15) view of Morrison's *Beloved* as a demonstration of the unspoken memories of slavery that disrupt the present and Sethe's daughter, Beloved, is viewed as:

> the continual eruption of 'undecipherable languages' of slave memory [that] obscures the historical narrative of infanticide only to articulate the unspoken: that ghostly discourse that enters the world of 124' from the outside in order to reveal the transitional world of the aftermath of slavery in the 1870's, its private and public faces, its historical past and narrative present.

Beloved's ghostly appearance reminds us that the sign in the novel is a combination of a present that may not easily be deciphered or defined because it is haunted by both articulated and disavowed spaces – past and present. Similarly, Namutowe (2019) utilises what may be considered an anachronistic narrative style in *Echoes of Betrayal* to depict the disruption of the biographical events of Bernard's life by a past relationship. The narrative does not go back and forth as is the usual case with flashbacks and flash-forwards, rather, the past and the present literally exist at the same temporal moment in the text. Specifically, we witness how Hilda and Bernards's present marriage becomes undecipherable and is interrupted when Bernard allows his ex-girlfriend back into his life. This breaks down Bernard's marriage to the extent where Hilda avenges by seeking divorce and having an affair with Nomsa's husband Derek. We first observe that Nomsa is literally haunting Hilda and Bernard's marriage from Bernard's confession about how affected he is when he hears about her marriage: "For a whole week I was haunted by the image of Nomsa being married to another man. I couldn't find any peace" (Namutowe, 2019, p. 198). Clearly, Nomsa is presiding over events in Bernard's marriage (despite being an outsider) before he has had time to initiate an affair with her. The haunting worsens when the affair is eventually initiated because Bernard begins to spend less and less time at home and this changes Hilda's attitude towards her husband when she finds out about the affair. As a result, the past and the present merge and in a similar way to the character Beloved, the past is no longer a nostalgic aspect but part of the present. The fact that the uncanny comes to disturb the marriage despite being unwelcome to Hilda and the marriage explicates how other places and other signs always reveal themselves no matter how we attempt to disavow their presence. That is why even though Hilda stays in the marriage during her husband's affair, she confesses that she is aware of the affair and only stays in the marriage because

of her children (Namutowe, 2019). Similarly, the discourse on linearity and absolute signification of oral narratives by signs in the novel is interrupted by the fact that other places always emerge with the sign's articulation preventing it from having a stable and reliable identity.

5.2.2 Marriage and Unhomeliness of the Sign[2]

The section considers the sign of marriage, as an ambivalent space where unwanted past affairs and other issues keep returning and disrupting its stability. The uncertainty arises when the taken for granted absoluteness of the relationship between the actual marriage (as a signifier) and signified (pure or perfect heterosexual marriage) is dismantled by the reality of the sign not being able to account for all the other places that emerge. Bhabha (1994) also argues that culture and the sign can only be located in the unhomely place that arises when all the other unfamiliar places are articulated. The expectation in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) regarding Isaac's marriage, after reconciling with Hilary, is that the reunion must now be pure and untainted by his past affair with Susan. Isaac reunites with his wife thinking they can move on from the past but unfortunately, the past cannot be erased and is very much a part of the present. This idea is vividly reflected in Isaac's views on peoples' sentiments about his affair with Susan and his love for his wife, Hilary:

> Many people have questioned my love for Hilary and even for Susan. They say that I never loved my wife enough because if I did, I wouldn't have fallen for another woman. The same people believe that my love for Susan wasn't genuine because what she and I had was an affair, and that type of love shouldn't exist. How do I explain to people that just because I cheated on my wife doesn't mean I loved her any less? Or that just because I fell in love with another woman whilst being married does not invalidate my feelings for either woman. (Namutowe, 2019, p. 120)

The above sentiments surrounding Isaac's infidelity and marriage demonstrate that the expectation is for Isaac's marriage to be an absolute signifier of a perfect marriage and monogamy, which leaves no room for his affair with Susan. Similarly, if his affair is taken as a signifier of absolute exclusion from marriage then Isaac cannot claim to have loved Hilary during that time. Yet, he insinuates that neither does his affair with Susan nor his marriage to Hilary prevent him from loving both women at the same time. This means that the perception of the affair and marriage as absolute signifiers (sign) of the love he has for Susan and Hilary is disrupted by Isaac's decision to settle for an unhomely space where he argues that he can love both his wife and Susan whether he is in the marriage or affair. The implication here is that during his affair with Susan he bears

traces of his love for Hilary. Here, the past confronts the present and makes it difficult for Isaac to separate the marriage and affair. Isaac also fails to define the affair or the marriage in the present and what emerges is not past and present but something else – an unsettling ambivalence. This is akin to Bhabha's (2018, p. 8) comments about a nation which he describes as "a destination at which you arrive beset by anxiety and anticipation of an extraneous geographic consciousness through passages of life shaped by itinerancy and exile-conditions of being that are so vividly present." Although this observation is based on the inability of nations to shade off their pre-nation experiences, it is pertinent to my observation regarding Isaac's reunion with Hilary after his affair with Susan. Of particular importance is how the return to the marriage, in a way similar to the creation of a nation, is not arrival at a destination because the destination or marriage is marred by the prior affair with Susan. It should further be noted that when Isaac reconciles with his wife Hilary, his affair with Susan continues to create anxiety in Isaac's marriage. This is because Isaac still thinks about Susan, Hilary does not recover from the affair, thereby facilitating ambivalence and unhomeliness or failure to arrive at a destination (while at the purported destination). One can only notice the uncertainty of the sign in this case by going against the expectations and confinements of both the affair and marriage as absolute signifiers of love. Isaac acknowledges the sign's inclination to articulate 'other places', such as the affair with Susan that continues to haunt them and creates imperfection and ambiguity in his marriage (with Hilary). Therefore, to confine images in the novel to oral narrative signification is flawed because the sign in the actual sense is characterised by both the authorised signifiers of love, such as the marriage, and the hidden ones, such as Isaac's affair, which make it an ambivalent site and not a homely destination.

Furthermore, the perfect signified and signifier (the sign) in the novel is an ungraspable 'around the corner' aspect which always arrives too late for us to perceive it. Whenever the sign is articulated in the 'present', there is a sense in which it is not the actual signified but always an anticipation of the signified. For instance in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) one of the characters, Hilda expects that divorcing Bernard will give way to happiness with Derek. However, Hilda soon realises that the future signifier of happiness she envisioned does not provide such closure because when she divorces Bernard, he continues to be a constant source of unhappiness to her new marriage. Bhabha (2018) explains this desired signified, or happiness in Hilda's case,

that visits the present in form of anticipation (and not a presence) as an act of belatedness or time-lag. In Agamben's (2009, pp. 51-52) words:

> the entry point to the present equates to …that part within the present that we are absolutely incapable of living. It is the unlived element in everything that is lived, that is the mass of what for some reason (its traumatic character, its excessive nearness) we have not yet managed to live. The attention to this unlived is the life of the contemporary.

Here, the present is something we yearn for but are incapable of living because the moment we think we are in the present, it is already in the past because we are living it at that moment –always an anticipation or unlived aspect. In like manner, the expected present or in this case, the life that Hilda expects to live after her divorce from Bernard becomes the unlived part of the present when she finally settles down with Derek. Happiness continues to be an anticipation (unlived moment) because when Hilda divorces Bernard she thinks that is the end of her problems but as she puts it, "theirs is not a happily ever after" (Namutowe, 2019, p. 261).

When the future finally articulates itself as 'present', it is different from Hilda's expectations. This is despite Hilda discussing the need for Bernard, her ex-husband to accommodate Derek (her new husband) in the childrens' lives before the divorce is finalised. Hilda narrates that: "Bernard is not making it easy for us. Sometimes, he goes out of his way to assert his position in the children's lives by undermining Derek's role" (p. 261). Hence, the present perception of the sign and the present in such a case is always something that is unlived (does not exist as a present signified). Hilda finds herself "stuck between the two men in my life: the father of my children, and the man who loves my children as if they were his own" (p. 261), instead of the life free from Bernard that she imagined she would have with Derek. As a result, the logocentric gravitation towards absolute signified and the underlying discourse of linearity from oral narratives to the novels drifts towards the 'unlived time' discussed above. This is at the expense of the ambivalent unexpected place that articulates itself in the present where the 'unlived time' is absent. Therefore, to be in the present means to live in the traumatic, ambivalent and unhomely place different from the expected signified which resides in an unattainable future. The indecipherable nature of a defined sign characterised by Hilda's ability only to experience the signified as an unlived part of the present, leads to the suggestion that the sign in the novel does not promise any absolute signified. The

present articulation of the sign is always an ambivalence because it is always what is articulated while our eyes are fixed on a future signified that always arrives too late for us to experience it.

Lastly, the instability of the sign is attributed to a continuous modification related to its hither and thither oscillation between 'almost signifier' and 'almost signified'. This is because the sign affects and is affected by other signs in its path such that when it returns to the starting point its effect is now different, as it swings from one end of the scale to another. That is, the sign has been altered by other signs resulting in the emergence of new places, which extend beyond the confines of definite and anticipated structure of the sign. In order to understand the kind of perpetual or on-going productivity, I suggest that one must imagine themselves leaving home for an unfamiliar place which they also have to leave as soon as it becomes familiar. However, the different places alter the sign so much that when it returns to the starting point it has also changed (Bhabha, 2018). This abolishes the idea of absolute signifier and signified because it means the process of signification transports the sign from a place of assumed distinctness (familiar home) to a place where it is opened up to other signifieds (unfamiliar places). Yet, more unfamiliar places emerge as the sign becomes familiar and settles in one of the other places. Isaac's situation after he ends his affair with Susan and eventually divorces Hilary symbolises the settlement in other places that I suggest. He is now engaged to Nomsa but when he is introduced to her family, they find out that:

> 'Apparently, the man had an affair with Nomsa's sister in-law [Susan] about five years ago', Derek said. 'Nobody knew until the man showed up at my former in-laws home to pay damages for impregnating their daughter.'… It won't be long before they realise that no matter the twisted past, the man has just saved their daughter from a possible lifetime of shame and loneliness'. (Namutowe, 2019, p. 262)

The fact that the affair comes back, brings the sign or Isaac back to his starting point but, in a similar way to a pendulum and the analogy of home, both the sign and the place have changed. Isaac, as Derek observes, must not be judged by his past meaning but must now be considered as Nomsa's Fiancé and not Susan's lover or Hilary's husband. Similarly, Nomsa's family must view him as the man who saves their daughter from her past as marriage breaker and adulterous wife. Therefore, the fact that the engagement marks a displacement of the past (the familiar) and a new start for Isaac and Nomsa demonstrates that the sign in the novel does not remain static but is perpetually under production and reproduction. Furthermore, Isaac's movement, first from his

marriage to Hilary, then to an affair with Susan, back to marriage with Hilary and then engagement to Nomsa signifies an on-going development of his life and character in the novel. Hence, the movement of oral narrative mnemonic images must not be viewed as a sign of continuity but movement to another dimension of production and reproduction – movement from the familiar to the unfamiliar.

5.3 *Ticklish Sensation*

The novel is about a character named Jojo who learns from one of the older boys he shares a hut with that when you touch a girl's breasts or kiss her you get a 'ticklish sensation'. He becomes obsessed with the desire to experience the 'ticklish sensation' and the narrative takes us through a series of unauthorised harassment of girls throughout his teen years. He humorously pursues different girls in order to touch their breasts but eventually manages to have intimate relationships with two girls during his secondary school years. His experiences illustrate the subjectivity of intimacy and the fact that two people cannot claim identical experiences in a relationship with the opposite sex. Despite this realisation, Jojo eventually gets married and confesses that he has finally experienced the 'ticklish sensation'.

5.3.1 Disruption of the Theoretical 'Ticklish Sensation'

The section examines the observation that novel's images cannot be considered pure signifiers of anything including oral narrative images because there are often discrepancies between the theoretical signifier of the 'ticklish sensation' in *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) (as theorised by Jojo from the older boy's stories) and the practical signifier. This discussion is based on Bhabha's (1994; 2004) idea of the complexity between performance and pedagogy. This is because in practice (performance) the outcome in novels, such as *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994), as we observe in the issue relating to Jojo and his pursuit of 'the ticklish sensation' (metaphor for the feeling one gets when a boy touches a girl's breasts) is often beyond our control and nullifies the authorised signified. That is why Bhabha (1994, p. 145) suggests that the nation as a sign should be narrated as split and its people must be viewed as both "the historical 'objects of a nationalist pedagogy…the pre-given, the people are also the 'subjects of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people." Bhabha's (1994) comments here concerning the definition of the nation are pertinent to my observation that, on the one hand, signs in the novel, such as 'the ticklish sensation', must be thought of in relation to both the abstract

signified of pedagogy – the one established by Jojo from the boys' stories. On the other hand, I suggest that 'the ticklish sensation' must be viewed in the light of the turbulence that it signifies in reality brought about by Jojo's vain and obsessive pursuit of the ticklish sensation.

To this effect, I explore how the contradiction between performance and pedagogy exposes a 'third space' or what I term 'in-betweeness' that is neither pedagogy or performance but something beyond the two concepts. This is because "though unrepresentable in itself…[the third space] constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensures that the meaning of symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). In addition, I explore whether the imbeddedness, as espoused by Bal (2009) and the creation of a simulacrum in the 'unstable inbetweeness' ('third space'), contributes to the dismissal of the sign of the 'ticklish sensation' as anything tangible or equivalent to the signified version of the 'ticklish sensation'. I propose that the sign of the ticklish sensation must be considered as a never-ending emergence in the 'third space' or 'unstable inbetweeness' where it becomes weaved in textuality as post-structuralists such as Barthes (2001) contend. Such a sign can never be considered a definite signifier of a specific theoretical signified such as the oral narrative.

I primarily note that Jojo's pursuit for the 'ticklish sensation' demonstrates how reality usually cancels the originary status of the abstract pedagogical signified because it deviates from the path of the standard signified. In *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994), Jojo's actions in response to the older boys' view that the 'ticklish sensation' is the feeling one gets on touching a woman's breasts are illustrative of contradiction that emerges in place of the expected signified. For Jojo this means that, on the one hand, he enacts or signifies the older boys' version of the 'ticklish sensation' that he hears from the older boys' descriptions on kissing, touching and sucking girls breasts. Although one of the boys is responsible for authenticating the 'ticklish sensation' by giving it a name, Jojo takes it as an absolute signifier of all similar experiences with girls. He then obsesses over the experience he thinks he is missing out on and strives to experience or 'search for the truth' (Phiri, 1994) as he terms it. On the other hand, the actual (Jojo's) process of signifying (enacting) the 'ticklish sensation' diverts from the boys' version and erases the originary status of the boys' version (signified). In one particular instance, Jojo unrelentingly chases and harasses a girl named Kinki Salamu around the village just to touch her breasts. His grandmother offers her breasts in order to pacify him and Jojo narrates that:

I sat there with my hands on dangling skins, head blank and face stupefied. I was waiting for ticklish sensation to attack me. But nothing came. I waited. Nothing. No current. No ticklish sensation. Nothing… 'A-a-aaa-no-no-no! Those are not breasts at all; not those, no. Who are you trying to fool with those useless skins? They don't bring any ticklish sensation at all; and you call them breasts. My friends told me breasts must be firm and pointed. Those are mere dangling skins. I want those I chose; those,' and I was pointing at Kinki. (Phiri, 1994, p. 36)

The above citation demonstrates the confusion, turmoil and experimentation that accompanies a young boy's entry into adolescence and discovery of his sexuality. This is similar to the confusion related to the articulation of a desired signified such as oral narratives because in Jojo's case his grandmother in a similar way to the unstable inbetweeness creates a space in which the sign of the theoretical signified 'ticklish sensation' can be enunciated. This is because, for Jojo the experience he has with his grandmother is different from the theory he created based on the boys' version of the 'ticklish sensation.' His dissatisfaction is certain from his insistence that he touches Kinki's breasts thinking that they are more likely to give him the signified 'ticklish sensation' he expects. The experience demonstrates that the process of signification is different from theorised signification, which must then be viewed as a mere abstraction.

The fact that Jojo's experience with his grandmother does not give him the ticklish sensation but increases his anticipation that Kinki Salamu's breasts will enunciate the desired ticklish sensation indicates the impossibility of finding the absolute signified of the ticklish sensation. However, theory and practice should be considered as complementary entities because they cannot exist without each other. Particularly, in Jojo's case, the practical, in this case touching his grandmother's or Kiniki's breasts, is influenced by the boys' version of the ticklish sensation. Conversely, the boys' theoretical version of the ticklish sensation is a product of practical experiences touching and kissing girls. As a result, this view disqualifies the idea of linearity and absolute signification, which presupposes absolute signification of oral narratives by images in the novel and does not take into account the actual signification and complementary triangulation related to signs such as the ticklish sensation in the novel. In practice, signification diverts from the authorised version of the signified as observed in the difference between the boys' authorised version of the 'ticklish sensation' and what Jojo experiences when he touches his grandmother's breasts, which are not the intended character or object. This complicates the pursuit for the ticklish

sensation further because even what he thinks to be the ideal is a double illusion – his grandmother's breasts are for instance an illusion of the boys' version of the ticklish sensation and also Kinki Salamu his intended target. It is for this reason that I discredit the insistence on linearity and absolute signification of the novel's images, which is tantamount to subjecting and confining the images to an absolute authority.

In addition, the process of signification diverts from the expected signified and scatters the sign into many directions of meaning. In reality, the articulation of the sign (even one from oral narratives) introduces other places and signifiers. If Jojo's search for the 'ticklish sensation' is restricted to the older boys' narration of their experiences, these other signifiers related to Jojo's experiences with other girls would have to be considered invisible. Jojo's obsession with the 'ticklish sensation' drives him to experiment with various girls, which results in varying signs each time. For example, his experience of dissatisfaction when he touches his grandmother's breasts is different from those from touching Kinki's breasts which fit the description (firm and pointed) (Phiri, 1994), yet the experiences still do not offer the desired 'ticklish sensation'. Jojo's pursuit of the 'ticklish sensation' and its contrary articulation of other signs is literally akin to how fixation on some sexual fetish produces two spaces: "one official, one secret, one archaic, one progressive, one that allows myth of origin, the other that articulates difference and division" (Bryne, 2009, p. 135). This type of logocentric fixation on an official entity or absolute signified as the case may be concerning the 'ticklish sensation', often presupposes fixity on a pre-given version by the older boys that must be obeyed without consideration of the diversity of the sign. Yet, as we observe from Jojo's experience with different girls, the pursuit for the authorised signified always forces other places to emerge. We specifically observe this in the cases where Jojo's pursuit for the theorised version of the 'ticklish sensation' leads to a series of experiences with different girls such as Kinki, Noli and Puna. These experiences deviate from the desired 'ticklish sensation' and illustrate that the signified of signs in novels such as *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) is never a universal entity.

Therein lies the inadequacy of the idea that one can only decipher the meaning of images in the novel by reference to oral narrative mnemonics or what Barthian studies (Trifonas, 2001) classify as interpretive archetypes.[3] In Jojo's case, the Fetish or interpretive archetype is embodied in his fixation on the boys' version of the 'ticklish sensation'. However, the unofficial distinctive

experiences he has with different girls in reality keeps interrupting this absolute signified. Three different incidences significantly show the dispersal of meaning of the 'ticklish sensation', which arise while Jojo is too busy chasing the fetish to notice other signs emerging. Firstly, Jojo's experience after touching his grandmother's breasts (which he terms as dry skins) (Phiri, 1994) does not give him the expected feeling of the 'ticklish sensation'. Instead, it raises more questions and makes his resolve to touch Kinki's breasts stronger and yet all he gets when he touches Kinki's breasts is "nothing but warmth…to my bitter frustration, it never came. Never!" (p. 40). This second experience leads him to disperse the 'ticklish sensation' further and when "guided by inspiration" (p. 72) he draws a picture that he sends to a girl named Noli at his school to symbolise his longing for the 'ticklish sensation': "the body came out with its exquisite angles and curves. It was nude. The bust protruded and nipples projected. That expressed my great concern over that part of her body" (p. 72). One notes how his vain pursuit for the 'ticklish sensation' articulates other places such as the experience with his grandmother, Kinki and Noli in its wake without articulating the signified. The back and forth movements between expected signified and Jojo's experiences with his grandmother, and with Kinki and Noli indicate that in reality, the sign is in perpetual oscillation between the expected signified and various other signs. Like fetishism, it is always a "play between the archaic affirmation of wholeness/similarity… and the anxiety associated with lack and difference" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 74). Yet, in practice, the sign keeps on being dispersed further because of the eternal 'lack', as we observe from the fact that Jojo keeps chasing after the signified. The lack is created by the fact that none of the experiences with the other girls is exactly like the signified 'ticklish sensation'. As a result, Jojo fails to find the signified and articulates other signs in the process. I generally extend this observation to images in the novel that cannot be considered autonomous entities referring to any signified because of the very fact that other places always emerge in practice.

In addition, Jojo's fixity on the boys' version as the absolute signified of the 'ticklish sensation' is significant in that it leads to dismissal of the sign itself when he fails to find a compatible match for the signified or accept the other places emerging. Unwavering focus on a stereotypical signified of the sign results in dismissal of actual signification. This is because abstract signification of this nature places emphasis on an original signified that no longer exists since other signs that emerge in the actual process of signification dismiss it. As Bhabha (1994, p. 67) observes,

To judge the stereotyped image on the basis of a prior political normativity is to dismiss it, not to displace it, which is only possible by engaging with its effectivity; with the repertoire of positions of power and resistance, dominion and dependence that constructs colonial identification subject.

Hence, fixity on the signified dismisses the sign (signification) because emphasis on a preconceived notion does not facilitate displacement of the absolute signified. Displacement would require acknowledgement of everything happening and emerging in the actual space of signification. For Jojo, this would include those experiences that do not match his expectations. However, Jojo's never-ending chase of the 'ticklish sensation' also symbolises his hesitation to displace the original version and settle for any of his actual experiences. After touching the breasts of Kinki, a girl who frequents the family compound to play with his sisters, Jojo narrates how the experience simply made "the truth about these boys' strange experiences become more and more questionable in my mind" (Phiri, 1994, p. 40). True to that, his curiosity leads him to pursue his cousin's wife even when his grandmother warns him "there is nothing like that in the whole world" (Phiri, 1994, p. 40). We observe how his cousin's wife keeps promising that she will let him touch her breasts but she tricks him and gives an excuse each time. One time, she tells Jojo to visit her the following morning but when Jojo shows up, she is pounding maize with her friends and tells him she had forgotten to mention her plans for that morning. On another occasion, she promises that he should wait for her on the path she normally takes when going to fetch water from the river. On the appointed day, Jojo waits for her but she never shows up and later claims he must have missed her because she took a different path (Phiri, 1994). This ironic interchange between the two continues with Jojo ending up frustrated each time.

Therefore, Jojo's experiences and his grandmother's observation are pertinent to my suggestion that the lack of initial open mindedness, concerning Jojo's approach to the 'ticklish sensation' (already prejudiced by the boys version), leads to the perpetual pursuit of the expected signified. This is particularly observed in the fact that Jojo does not get the feeling he expects when he touches his grandmother's or Kinki's breasts or pursues his cousin's wife. Evidently, the fact that Jojo never gets the expected 'ticklish sensation' from any of his experiences with different women, dismisses the absolutism of the boys' version of the signified 'ticklish sensation'. In addition, it confirms that his grandmother is right about the impossibility of signifying the illusive expected signified. Hence, the desired signification is dismissed as impossible and condemned to a perpetual

oscillation between the abstract signified of the 'ticklish sensation' (which is not the signified because it fails to be the signified) and the actual signification, which is marred by differences. In a similar manner, forcing linearity and pure signification between oral narratives and the novel dismisses signification altogether because the view emphasises a signified that is already nullified by the other signs that emerge. In actual signification, this is illustrated in the way Jojo's pursuit for the boys' version of the 'ticklish sensation' leads him to experimenting by touching different people's breasts without yielding the expected feeling of a 'ticklish sensation' as discussed above.

Furthermore, other layers of meaning production arise from the fact that Jojo's public display related to his intention to touch Kinki's breasts opens up the 'ticklish sensation' to unrelated interpretations from different observers in the village. This illuminates different levels of signification that occur simultaneously and form layers of signification typical of Bhabha (1994) and Ali's (2018) palimpsest. The rest of the community interprets the situation (when Jojo chases Kinki with the intention of touching her breasts) differently because Jojo's behaviour is viewed as "cultural phenomena attached to belief systems [which] could have cosmological, sociological or psychological layers of meaning" (Wolf, 2000, p. 139). There is a difference in interpretation of the behaviour between Jojo, who interprets and justifies his behaviour from his pre-understanding of the boys' version of the signified 'ticklish sensation', and the other members of his community, who interpret his behaviour based on other beliefs and values. For instance, Jojo's mother views his harassment of Kinki as a symbol of 'bitter shame' (Phiri, 1994, p. 35) because it goes against what she expects (signified) from her children. One woman judges Jojo's behaviour as a taboo by the traditional standards for Jojo's age group and relatedly comments that "if our [their] ancestors won't rise from their tombs today, the sky will collapse" (p. 34). Another woman deems the behaviour contrary to Christian behaviour and calls Jojo, "Lucifer's show-pieces made in his image. He is a typical example of Satan's saliva" (p. 38). Clearly, Jojo's search for the 'ticklish sensation' here evokes other layers of signification and his pursuit for Kinki's breasts now becomes a signifier of other things –embarrassment to his mother, taboo to tradition and anti-Christian to the other women. The humour in these contrasting perceptions comes from how seriously the three different reactions are taken by the people that put them across. The reactions are especially humorous to the reader who unlike the villagers in the novel (Phiri, 1994) understands that Jojo's action are motivated by his belief in the boys' version of the 'ticklish

sensation'. Yet, these other levels or reactions from the villagers are inevitable and separate from the boys' primary signification of the 'ticklish sensation'. Hence, a process of signification which exposes many layers of meaning, as observed in Jojo's chase of Kinki that results in the signified becoming a signifier of other things, cannot be trusted to have specified relationship to particular signification. This includes the assumed absolute signifier/signified relationship between images in the novel and oral narrative mnemonic images.

There is also a detachment and eternal loss of the original signified of the 'ticklish sensation' as demonstrated by the comments from Jojo's father over Jojo's behaviour related to touching Kinki's breasts. This is because the initial signification (and the signified) involving articulation of the boys' version of the ticklish sensation gets lost due to the other sites (such as Jojo's father's comments) of signification that open up in the process of searching for a compatible signifier for the signified 'ticklish sensation'. The misidentification and loss of a pre-given signified is similar to the way an embedded narrative may lead to a situation in a text where "we eventually forget the fabula of the primary narrative… the apparently loose relationship between primary and embedded text is relevant to the development of the primary fabula" (Bal, 2009, p. 57). The articulation of embedded signification may lead to confusion and lack of clarity over which signified existed before the articulation or signification process. Jojo narrates that his father makes the following double-edged comment after removing him from the house of the wisdom: "'You have been in a basket of rotten eggs, boy.' And to my mother he said, 'I am glad he'll be an intelligent boy. Those in search of knowledge are such curious human beings'" (Phiri, 1994, p. 42). On one hand, the removal from the hut and the classification of the older boys as 'rotten eggs' demonstrate that Jojo's father recognises the bad influence the boys' stories have on his son. On the other hand, Jojo's father regards his son's behaviour as a positive search for knowledge. The comments above reflect a multi-layered interpretation of Jojo's actions by his father. In addition, it reflects an embedding similar to Bals (2009) observation on the loss of the original fabula because the interpretation is detached from the inspiration of Jojo's actions and the boys' version of the signified 'ticklish sensation'. That is, the comments by Jojo's father deviate from Jojo's initial signified of the 'ticklish sensation', which guides his actions. This is unlike his father's comments that are influenced by Jojo's actions and not the original signified. The ease with which other layers of meaning such us Jojo's father's comments emerge during articulation of a sign of the 'ticklish

sensation' means that someone who does not know the primary story or pre-given signified, may end up confused and lost in the maze of many significations. The comments about Jojo's behaviour ends up articulating more meaning than the initial intended 'ticklish sensation' (unrelated to the signified and Jojo's mission). At the same time it articulates meaninglessness if we confine it to the expected signified (Bhabha, 1994) because the comments (from his father) over Jojo's behaviour have a distinct and independent meaning from the original signified. Therefore, the signified can be considered as something that is lost forever in the maze of other unfolding signification such that it cannot refer to unique signification such as the one where images in the novel only refer to oral narratives.

It should be underscored that the different instances of meaning that emerge when the sign is being articulated should be considered as illusions that hide the fact that there is actually no signified under all these layers of meaning. The signified is untenable because the different layers of signification only offer surface meaning without magnamic substance in a similar way to a mirror (Kalua, 2009). The idea of surface meaning is related to meaning that is readily available to us and may or may not be a true and complete reflection of the composition of an object. Thus, 'other' signifiers emerge in Jojo's search for the signified 'ticklish sensation' but each of the different players, such as his father and the other women who comment on his behaviour towards Kinki, are convinced that theirs is the best interpretation of Jojo's actions. Peeling off all these layers of meaning in search of the boys' version of the signified reveals nothing – not the expected signified, when the different layers are analysed individually. For instance, the interpretation by some of the villagers that Jojo's behaviour is characteristically satanic (Phiri, 1994) is not related to the boys' version of the signified in any way. In fact, the older boys' version of the signified cannot be perceived the same because of the other interpretations of the 'ticklish sensation' that arise. This, together with the fact that it is not articulated in the signified (at no time do we witness any of the boys experiencing the ticklish sensation in the text) makes the signified ticklish sensation a mask with nothing behind it. This means that an abstract signified, such as the 'ticklish sensation', does not exist in the present of *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) because it is characterised by the emergence of other signs such as the interpretations by Jojo's parents and the other villagers, which do not contain the signified (boys' version of the ticklish sensation) underneath. The difference in the two demonstrates the workings of Braudrillard's (1988) third stage of simulation, which

presupposes signs that hide the absence of an original sign underneath.[4] Such signs, which have no direct relationship to the original signified but keep on picking images along the way (which mask the original), cannot be sustained as stable signs related to any specific signified including oral narratives.

Furthermore, the sign in the novel cannot be an absolute signifier of oral narratives because the reference to the past already nullifies its total presence in the novel. This is because the sign transfers meaning to the past while assuming the present has no meaning of its own and ignores the other meanings being produced in the present moment. Both Jojo and the other boys' version of the 'ticklish sensation' is not based on the present but previous experiences. It resonates with Barthes' (1981) concern about the confusion between 'real' and 'alive' and his view that something may be real in relation to the past but not alive in reality (the present). Barthes (1981, p. 79) demonstrates this with the contradiction surrounding a photograph:

> By attesting that the object has been real, the photograph surreptitiously induces belief that it is alive, because of that delusion which makes us attribute to reality an absolutely superior, somehow eternal value; but by shifting this reality to the past ('this-has-been'), the photograph suggests that it is already dead.

It is clear from the above quotation that the photograph always depicts something that is real but was captured in the past and this shifts meaning to the past making the photograph dead to the present. In *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994), there is a twofold manifestation of Barthes' (1981) observation concerning the relationship between the past and the present. The boys base their discussion of their experiences about touching girls' breasts and kissing them on encounters with particular girls in the past. They do not take into consideration that this experience belongs to the past because in the moment of narration it is simply theory, which cannot guarantee identical experience with different girls in future. Barthes (1981) also observes that the possibility that people in the photograph are dead worsens the situation because the people that are supposed to act as a reference point to something that existed in the past no longer exist. That is, they exist neither in the present nor the past and reality dies. In the same way that Jojo signifies something that is twice dead because the ticklish sensation represents the boys' theory (photograph) and their past experiences of kissing girls and touching their breasts (the people who were alive when the picture was taken). Hence, Jojo's insistence on the boys' version of the 'ticklish sensation' blinds

him from the reality and present experiences because it is fixated on that past – a past that is twice removed from reality. By extension, the fixation related to the insistence that images in the novel purely signify oral narrative images is challenged here in that it depends on reference to a past (oral narratives) that may be related to a reference point from the past, which may not be alive or present just as the people in the photograph.

Henceforth, an encounter with signs in the novel must be viewed as a fleeting moment, which cannot be held onto long enough for definite identity to be established. This is because many other signs are touched lightly but not long enough to ground signification as the process of signification swings back and forth between assumed signified and potential signifier. This is akin to the underlying principle behind the sculpture of a multi-faceted mirror mountain, placed "in various locations to take in the reflections always only temporarily, again reflecting but not holding the images and implying that all images are fleeting, and as if there are literally no grounds for inventing stereotypes" (Shu-mei-Shih, 2018, p. 217). The principle behind this artistic display is that different nations have influenced the world differently at different times such that none of them has reason to claim more contribution to history than other nations. In *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) the desire to stick to the boys' version of the signified ticklish sensation is challenged by the fact that the many different experiences Jojo goes through are always too brief to establish a true definition of the 'ticklish sensation'. This is evidenced in the quickness with which his experimentation with Noli (the girl for whom Jojo draws a picture with protruding breasts illustrating his desire for the ticklish sensation) and Puna (a girl at a neighbouring girls school that he gets into a relationship with when he goes to boarding school later) end. The hope for discovering and grounding the 'ticklish sensation' ends when Noli loses the drawing and the two end up in trouble with school authorities (Phiri, 1994). What we observe here is only an illusionary presence of the 'ticklish sensation' which ends soon after it starts because Jojo never gets to touch Noli's breasts as he quits school the same day of the drawing incident to avoid punishment. Later on, Jojo goes to secondary school and strikes a relationship with a girl called Puna from a neighbouring boarding school but once again, the relationship does not go further than letters of longing between the two. This is because Puna is expelled when school authorities discover one of the letters Jojo writes to her (Phiri, 1994). In both cases, the illusion of the ticklish sensation expressed in the desire of the nude drawing to Noli and the love letters to Puna demonstrate how

the relationships do not last long enough for Jojo to experience and potentially ground or discover the signified 'ticklish sensation'. Jojo's encounters can be likened to touching the future on its 'hither side' (Bhabha, 1994: Huddart, 2006; Bryne, 2009) since the expected future always 'almost' materialise and before we can experience it in full, it is gone. It is for this reason that images in the novel cannot be considered graspable or grounded enough to signify oral narrative images, in a similar way to the fleeting characteristic of Jojo's experiences when searching for the 'ticklish sensation'.

5.3.2 Beyond Dichotomies of the Signifier/Signified 'Ticklish Sensation'

In this section, I challenge dichotomies of the signifier/signified that inform the assumption that images in the novel are more representative of oral narratives than any other factors. I propose that the sign in the novel must be viewed outside the discourse of dichotomies and the abstract separation that comes with the essentialist tendency to regard some signs as more representative of something than others. Separatist thinking of this kind is challenged in practice by the emergence of other signifiers that open up signification to indefinite possibilities and frees the signifier from an absolute signified. Jojo's enactment of the 'ticklish sensation' can be classified as freeing of the boys' version of the signified to a point where the absolute relationship between the signified and signifier is nullified to 'the realm of the beyond' (Bhabha, 1994) where things cease to signify other things (Kalua, 2009). Furthermore, Kalua (2009, p. 25) defines this space of signification as:

> That post-dialectical moment when people reject structures and hegemonies and occupy any one of the heterogeneous spaces where they negotiate narratives of their existences as well as of particular spaces of meaning and different identities of meaning and different identities.

In this case, the sign operates outside of any structures that demand its affiliation and there is freedom to settle on any of the signifiers that emerge. That is why, as Jojo grows older, he learns that the 'ticklish sensation' is not an absolute or particular feeling. Rather, he could get different pleasurable experiences with women even without them being exact signifiers of the older boys' experiences. The change in perception of the signification occurs for the first time during Jojo's relationship with Lise, a girl he meets while staying with his cousin in Mazabuka. This is a town in Southern Zambia where he has gone to continue education after being expelled from his old school. Jojo narrates how he is surprised that he enjoys his first kiss even if it differs from his

expected 'ticklish sensation' and taste of milk: "Our lips touched. Her tongue shot into my mouth. I sucked with all my madness. I pulled her saliva and drank it. It didn't taste like milk. It was rather insipid. But I enjoyed the experience" (Phiri, 1994, p. 112). This is the first time we observe Jojo enjoying something different from the boys' version of kisses tasting like milk and the 'ticklish sensation'.

However, the experience demonstrates a freeing of the signified from dichotomies of signifier and signified, which include Jojo's expectation that he would find a signifier or experience that perfectly matches the boys' experiences with women. His acknowledgement of the end of absolute signification is marked by the fact that he has another relationship with a different girl, Puna, before he marries a girl named Meeky Banda who he meets while he is still at secondary school. The fact that Jojo acknowledges different experiences of the 'ticklish sensation' without subjecting them to the boys' version falls outside the confines of the assumed signified. Specific reference can be made to the signified status of the boys' 'ticklish sensation' and its referential relationship to an abstract signifier. The failure of such a sign to take part in the signifier/ signified relationship by offering only signifiers, as observed in Jojo's different and free-floating relationships, is indicative of Barthes' (1985) idea of a 'third meaning' that only exists at the level of signifier. A sign located only at signifier level cannot be involved in the dichotomised signifier/signified relationship. Hence, if images in the novel are considered as existing only as signifiers then there is no chance that they can refer back to any signified in this case oral narratives and claim linearity or descendency from them.

It must be noted that one of the major weaknesses of fixity on an absolute signified is the tendency to extend the meaning of one sign (signified) to other signs (signifiers). Such a move undermines the subjectivity of interpretation of signs and production of meaning which is characterised by variation. In a similar way, Jojo's first mistake in *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) is his assumption that the version of the ticklish sensation he hears from one of the older boy's experiences with a girl is representative of all other similar experiences. This can be explained further with the challenge related to scientific experimentation and its reliance on abstract hypothetical models that cannot be verified at theoretical level. Such hypotheses can only be validated if the theory agrees with practice, that is why, in Jojo's case, the theory of the 'ticklish sensation', and its application is not enough to guarantee that his actual experience will be an exact replication. This is the reality

concerning the case of the search for the missing Malasian airline, which revealed the limitations of inductive reasoning. Clearly, the methods that may have worked in other similar cases did not work here. That is: "the ocean was not a very reliable witness and the very instruments and techniques used to probe, monitor and digitise it were easily outwitted by its materiality –its fluidity, turbulance, crushing water pressure, and impenetrable depths" (Bremner, 2018, p. 244). Here the ocean is a literal representation of the phrase 'drop in the ocean' because a fixed hypothesis on some authorised theory of signification or the signifier/signified relationship proved inadequate for the materiality of the sign. In like manner, Jojo's interaction with the 'ticklish sensation' demonstrates how a theoretical model is not easily applied in the subjectivity of reality.

An analysis of the origin of the 'ticklish sensation' shows that the coining of the term already suffers from subjectivity as Jojo's picks only one of the many experiences of the boys in the house of wisdom and uses it as a yardstick for his experiences with other women. In fact, Jojo picks the 'ticklish sensation' from one of the two different experiences that one of the boys Tondo shares about touching a girl's breasts: "And those breasts! Boy, they are sweeter than honey" (Phiri, 1994, p. 19). When further asked if he fondled the breast, Tondo responds that: "I sat on her thighs and played with them. The ticklish sensation I got was more than words could tell" (p. 19). What is interesting is that what makes an impression on Jojo is Tondo's second statement related to the 'ticklish sensation'. This is clearly subjective because it is not obvious that another person would make the same choice. Importantly, Jojo authorises the 'ticklish sensation' as the universal feeling or signified that one is expected to get from any similar experience with a woman. On the contrary, Jojo's experiences with different women demonstrate how the sign of the 'ticklish sensation' is subjected to fluidity and turbulence or changeability similar to the ocean's character concerning the search for the Malasian airline. Jojo's subjectivity when choosing the 'ticklish sensation' and his eventual unsettling experience with different women demonstrates that one instance of signification must not be assumed as universal. In reality, differences in the choices made by people may result in inconsistences such as those observed from Jojo's experiences with the opposite sex. In the same way, it should not simply be assumed that the linear continuation and signification of oral narratives by the novel is universal and reflective of every Zambian novel in English.

The subjectivity of the sign discussed above means that the sign is constantly under revision and should be considered as an open text (Barthes, 1986) in which every sign's encounter results in reconfiguration. This is because the process of signification is characterised by introjection, retrojection and displacement (Bhabha, 1994). In *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) one may note that each of Jojo's enactments of the 'ticklish sensation' restructures the sign because each experience with different girls changes his perception of the 'ticklish sensation' in different ways. Yet, the effect of his behaviour on both the girls and himself are important in establishing an eclectic determination of the kind of revision that takes place on the sign. The concern I raise here echoes observation about how artwork is viewed as static without consideration of the duo effect that different places and things can have on it. As Payne (2018, p. 94) observes: "How does the (art) object appear when its expansive geography is included in its history? That those with whom it came into contact –people and things –also change along the way as a result of contact. What are the narratives that are embedded and hidden inside its trajectories in space and time?" This means that a travelling piece of art leaves distinct impressions on different people and redefines the art form according to their perspectives. This is pertinent to my view that the articulation of the sign in novels, such as the ticklish sensation, is continuously revised by different encounters with different girls such as Kinki, Noli, Puna and Meeky. Hence, there is need for an intentional observation and comparison of the sign's character before and after an encounter with different geographies and people, in order to answer the question on the hidden stories that emerge along the signs path of enunciation stated above.

This intentional observation and comparison of the sign's character should determine the effect the sign has on people and things because their perception reveals important information about the sign that may alter our perception of the sign. As a result, the 'ticklish sensation' must not be viewed as a static signifier of the boys' signified 'ticklish sensation'. Rather, one must identify the sign with an acknowledgement of the constant revisions resulting from the impression made on both Jojo and the different encounters with the 'ticklish sensation' throughout the novel. For instance, when Jojo touches Kinki's breasts the sign of the 'ticklish sensation' is revised on two counts because, as discussed earlier, Jojo does not enjoy the experience and this revises the act of touching breasts to signify something other than the pleasure the boys discussed in the house of wisdom. Yet, the revision should not be restricted to Jojo's experience but must include Kinki's

reaction of enjoyment: "It occurred to me that it was Kinki who enjoyed the act. All through that period when my hand had rested on her chest, fingers denting her breasts, she kept on giggling; raising her shoulders and dropping them" (Phiri, 1994, p. 40). Kinki's perspective demonstrates another dimension of the revision of the 'ticklish sensation', which changes the signified 'ticklish sensation' because it includes a girl's reaction that was not part of the older boys' narration. A later revision of the signified 'ticklish sensation' is portrayed in the incident where Jojo spends a night in the bush after the bus on which he is travelling overturns leaving passengers stranded. He narrates that the women passengers are especially troubled by mosquitoes and in order to wad them off "they kicked their legs about helplessly. This action made them careless. They exposed their bodies to the view of everybody. Short glimpses of their breasts reminded me of the ticklish sensation" (96). The fact that a glimpse of the breasts evokes the 'ticklish sensation' extends the signified to more than the feeling one gets from touching breasts. The changes brought to the signified 'ticklish sensation' by Jojo's experience with Kinki and later with the women on the bus reflects how the sign is constantly under revision or hybridisation as Bhabha (1991; 1994; 2004) observes and cannot refer to any static identity. This is because different articulation of the sign has nothing to do with a fixed signifier (a particular incident that matches the boys'version of the ticklish sensation) which can be equated to the initial signified (the boys' version). This means that whether the sign is assumed to be static, as in Jojo's experience with Kinki, or moving, such as when Jojo is in a different location with the bus passengers, the sign is constantly being revised by both the marks it carries and leaves behind. For this reason, a sign that changes and is changed by the different encounters cannot be considered a stable referent of oral narratives because the emergence of not one but many signifiers of the ticklish sensation in Jojo's case indicates that the articulation of the sign is beyond the expected signifier and signified match.

The signification must be viewed as a process that offers no closure. In this case, signification in the novel is open to perpetual intertexuality (Barthes, 1985) and the sign is a bottomless entity that can be used differently with no specific conclusion. The complexity related to Jojo's search for the 'ticklish sensation' is instructive here because it unveils different manifestations and reactions from different encounters between Jojo and different women. It is for this reason that Jojo's perception that he has finally found the 'ticklish sensation' in his wife Meeky Banda is contradicted by my observation that the sign in the novel is incapable of stability and closure of any kind. Jojo

narrates, after his marriage that: "I was plunged into an ecstasy of delight such as I had never experienced before…at last the real ticklish sensation rippled forcefully through my hungry body (Phiri, 1994, p. 196)." Unbeknown to him what he experiences at this point is a kind of Melancholia which according to Freudian psychology "is closely related to mourning, but differs from it in that it cannot be overcome and unlike in mourning where a lost object is mourned and finally accommodated, what has been lost remains unknown" (Bryne, 2009, p. 122). This means that the only way to accommodate melancholia or the never-ending articulation of grief is to acknowledge that it will never end because the subject of the grief can never be recovered or discovered. This is because what Jojo experiences with his wife can never be an exact replication of the boys' experiences with other women. That is, what has been lost in the original signified can never be found since not even the signified 'ticklish sensation' is original owing to eternal textuality of the sign. Evidently, the big boys and Jojo relate with women under different circumstances, which results in the experience of 'ticklish sensation' constantly evolving because circumstances and people always change. This is particularly observed when Jojo, as earlier mentioned, marries and believes he is finally experiencing the boy's 'ticklish sensation' and yet he is not. As a result, signification occurs in a similar way to the above analogy of melancholia since the search for the absolute signified is never-ending with the perception of the signified ending up lost in the different practical encounters. This is further justified by the answer Jojo's grandmother gives about why Kinki's breasts are different from hers leads us to the suggestion that Meeky's breasts will one day be "dry old skins" (Phiri, 1994) and no longer as fleshy and pointed as the breasts described by the boys. The signifier of the 'ticklish sensation' would, at that point, not have reached its conclusion but would have gone full circle, from 'fleshy pointed breasts' to 'old skins' – only this time it would not be Jojo's grandmother's breasts but Meeky's. Hence, the nature of signification is similar to melancholia in that the search for the signified is eternal because the assumed signified is lost in the different signifiers that emerge along the way in the same way that a return to the old skins is now linked to Meeky and not Jojo's grandmother.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that signs or images in the Zambian novel in English cannot be absolute signifiers and linear descendants of indigenous Zambian oral narratives. The signs, in some novels, such as *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) and *Ticklish Sensation* (Namutowe, 2019), occupy

an unstable in-between space characterised by eternal incomplete oscillation between signifier and signified. Both texts were analysed in order to argue that there is often a difference between what we authorise as the standard identity for signs in the novel and what actually happens in reality. In reality, the signs are in perpetual production and revision because they are constantly on the move between absolute signified and potential signifier. In addition, other signs and spaces of signification always emerge and scatter meaning into different directions. This means that signs in the novel must be viewed as fleeting mirrors (Kalua, 2009; Shu-mei-Shih, 2018) which rub on to other signs along the way and pass by too quickly for meaning to be grounded. The signified is dismissed and lost along the way such that signifiers that emerge simply eclipse the absence underneath, because of not being grounded. This results in unstable signs, which are incapable of being reliable signifiers of anything including oral narrative mnemonic images.

I argued that all signs in the novel are unstable intermediaries stemming from the fact that both the signifier and signified are always split entities. This is because the signified is always an abstract form referring to a mental concept and the actual signifier refers to a reality that often deviates from the abstract signified. In practice, the sign is caught up in perpetual attempts to become the signified, which results in unstable intermediary (eternal oscillation between reality and the desired signified) observed with the marriages in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019). What emerges is a shaky borderline space such as the one that Susan and Isaac find themselves in when they initiate an affair while married. Their relationship is characterised by partial presence in both the affair and their marriages, which always haunt each other. Hence, the sign of marriage is an ambivalent and unsettled place where Isaac fails to settle after reconciling with his wife.

The chapter's analysis also showed that, in another marriage, Hilda discovers that the absolute signified remains an eternal future anticipation. That is upon discovering that her relationship with Derek that she thought would bring redemption and happiness is impossible. Her ex-husband, Bernard continues to torment her after divorce and happiness continues to be an anticipated entity in the new marriage as it was in the old one. The observation then is that, the sign of marriage in the novel is constantly under revision since it deviates from the desired perfect marriage and is articulated as an imperfect intermediary and ambivalent space. The sign in the novel must be viewed as something that is constantly on the move and can only be articulated in the present as an unstable in-between space that offers no grounded meaning. This results in the constant

movement between something that resembles the desired signified but at the same time something different as observed in the marriages and affairs that exist simultaneously in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019). Hence, I noted that images in the novel that are split entities and always manifest as partial, haunted imperfect intermediaries cannot be pure signifiers of oral narratives.

A further observation made here is that, there is a contradiction between standard and performance. This underscores the need to view signification beyond the confines of signifier/signified dichotomies. This justifies why the theoretical claim that signs in the novel signify oral narratives falls short of expectations. The observation is drawn from my analysis of Jojo's pursuit of the version of the 'ticklish sensation' he hears from older boys in *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994). Jojo's discovery that the 'ticklish sensation' is the feeling one gets when they touch girls' breasts or kiss, leads him to an obsessed search for that feeling. In reality, the search scatters meaning of the 'ticklish sensation' in different directions because Jojo has different experiences with different girls. The realisation of the existence of many contradicting experiences or articulations of the 'ticklish sensation' dismisses the older boys' (original signified) version as the absolute signified. Furthermore, Jojos search for the 'ticklish sensation' articulates other sites of signification when other meanings are ascribed to Jojo's 'crazy' behaviour as particularly witnessed when he publicly pursues Kinki Salamu in an attempt to touch her breasts. This and other spaces of signification that emerge dismiss or lose the original signified in the process. This is because they are different and not related to the original ticklish sensation such as the interpretation of Jojo's behaviour from a Christian or traditional taboo perspective. Hence, signifier and signification that emerges while the sign of the 'ticklish sensation' is being articulated may be considered as illusions similar to Braudrillard's (1988) simulacra because they do not refer back to the original signified 'ticklish sensation'. In addition, the difference of the sign's articulation in reality and its ability to articulate other signs and sites of signification indicates how the sign keeps being revised with no closure. This demonstrates that the sign in novels such as *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) must be considered as articulated in a space beyond signifier/signified dichotomies and consequently where signification ceases. Ultimately, this is an unstable space in-between signifier and signified but outside signification and therefore incapable of linear descendency and stable signification of oral narratives as pure signified.

Endnotes

[1] I use in-between to describe a space that does not restrict signification to a fixed and definite location between the signifier and the signified. This is not simply the preposition 'between' but an adjective and adverb describing the non-static and dynamic intermediary that characterises the 'betweeness' of signification and nullifies definite signification.

[2] Unhomeliness is related to Heidegger's (1962) existential idea that describes being present as dasein-being there. Unhomeliness arises when the obviousness of 'being in' or being there (at home) is collapsed by the uncanny and 'being in' or being there is interrupted by not-at-home or unhomely places.

[3] The idea of interpretive archetypes is born out of Barthes (1973) observation on how society creates myths by naturalising certain aspects of culture and authorising them as universal standards of interpreting and viewing the world.

[4] The observation is drawn from Baudrillard's (1988) four stages of image depiction: the first stage involves the image as an exact copy of the original; the second denotes a deviation from the original; the third stage that interests me likens an image to something that pretends to represent the original and yet it has no original behind it. Rather what exists is an arbitrary relationship to the original image; the fourth stage is a hyperreal simulacrum that does not claim to represent reality or any image.

Chapter Six: Identity, Othering, Other 'others': Oral Narrative Mnemonics in *The Mourning Bird* and *The Old Drift*

6.1 Introduction

I presently argue that images in the novel cannot be identified with absolute oral narrative mnemonic images because the term 'identity' presupposes a pre-inscribed tangible entity to which objects unyieldingly subscribe (Lacan, 1992; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). In the immediate previous chapter, I discussed how images in the novel are located in an unstable in-between space (between signifier and signified) where they cannot be considered absolute referents of oral narratives. In the present chapter, I suggest further that such a view must never be conflated in the term identity because such an approach would be as flawed as subscription to any absolute entity or signified. Subscription to the term 'identity' is synonymous with fixation of images in the novel on oral narrative ancestry which presupposes that 'identity' is a pre-determined absolute and fixed logocentre or oral narrative signified (Derrida, 1974) to which images in the novel refer. Preoccupation with 'identity' as a tangible object "that all people have, seek, construct" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 2) is the reason that empiricists constructed an orientalist 'other' on which they could map identity and justify their 'civilising mission' (Said, 1985). Conversely, a similar preoccupation motivates decolonial attempts related to nationalist goals to locate and recapture an authentic African and Zambian identity by emphasising oral narrative mnemonic images in both practice and analysis of the Zambian novel in English (Chinweizu, et al., 1985; Onwumere & Egblonu, 2014). However, Derrida (1974) rejects such a logocentric approach to analysis on account that by virtue of pre-inscription, the 'identity' (in this case oral narrative ascendency) is simply a culturally naturalised Other (Lacan, 1992) that deludes the subject (novel) into accepting the object as its inherent identity (Chiesa, 2007). As a result, I argue that oral narrative mnemonic images become trapped in the representation of African identity and the novel with frozen images, while the aim of decolonisation is cultural identification and affirmation. This inadvertently promotes orientalist[1] stereotyping tendencies or evolutionist (Crowin, 2000) and modernist (Donby, 2009) views of a backward African society and literature, which is always playing catch up with the West (Musila, 2008). This approach to the novel is insufficient for eclectic analysis of

the novel because it focuses on one aspect, in this case oral narrative influence and identity at the expense of any other category of interpretation available.

In this chapter, I use images in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) to explore how fixation on a pre-inscribed 'identity'/signified, such as oral narrative mnemonics in the novel, facilitates the creation of centre-periphery binaries. That is the 'Other' (authorised identity) is located at the centre of meaning while every image that does not fit into that meaning is othered ('othering') (Said, 1985; Lacan, 1992; Musila, 2008) – excluded and pushed to the periphery or the margins (Spivak, 1988). Furthermore, I discuss images in *The Old Drift* (Serpel, 2019) to explore how the articulation of other 'others' opens up analysis to infinite 'other' idioms that do not fit neatly into the authorised Other identity and oral narratives. The aim is to establish whether the fact that the idea of absolute identity is complicated by resultant othering and articulation of other 'others' still allows us to depend on identity and an absolute oral narrative signified to analyse images in the novel. Therefore, while my previous chapters deconstruct oral narrative signified and linearity on the basis of multicultual and carnivalesque images, differànce, chronotopes and unstable in-betweeness, in the present chapter, I argue that such alternative idioms should never be conflated in the term 'identity'. Hence, I continue my deconstructionist agenda of this thesis by arguing that 'identity', as is the case with fixation on linearity and oral narrative ancestry for images in the novel, collapses on itself because it cannot perform all the functions it is purported to encompass.

The argument in this chapter is mainly anchored on the Derridan (Derrida, 1974) rejection of fixity related to logocentrism or a centre of meaning, such as 'identity' (in this case oral narrative images), because it creates binaries and polarities where one pole is privileged as more logocentric and hence a reference point for the other. This is pertinent to my views relating to the discourse on linearity where oral narratives and the novel are viewed as a binary pair in which oral narrative images form the tangible logocentric identity to which images in the novel subscribe. One can note Derrida's (1974, p. 31) concerns over the Saussurian (de Saussure, 1959) binary relationship between speech and writing where: "Writing will be… the outside, the exterior representative of language and this thought-sound [speech]. It must necessarily operate from already constituted units of signification in the formation in which it played no part." This demonstrates how writing and products of writing, such as the novel and its images, are mapped onto oral narrative identity

by virtue of the logocentric idea that oral narratives are closer to natural language and the centre of meaning. It is for similar reasons that decolonial discourse related to nationalist goals justifies the return and continuation of a pristine, authentic indigenous orality (espoused by oral narrative images in the novel) that existed before the colonial introduction of writing (and the novel). In both Saussurian (de Saussure, 1959) and decolonialist cases (Ashcroft, 2004), authentication of such assumptions requires fixation on tangible but practically abstract 'identity' (logocentric centre of origin). This is because the pre-inscribed entity may not fit into every actual category of analysis deeming the logocentre valueless and impossible to articulate. The idea that the logocentre is by virtue of pre-inscription always an irreducible entity is explicated by Lacan's (1992) theory on development of the self.[2] This reference is relevant to arguments in this chapter because the pursuit for identity is triggered by human beings' inherent helplessness and uncertain identity (crisis). The identity crisis drives human beings to direct their desire on a spectacular image in order to identify themselves – "uncertainty about the identity of the self, which makes it easier to define it by what it is not" (Musila, 2008, p. 71). In a similar manner to the institution of a logocentre, identity or oral narrative images on the novel, the Other (a pre-inscribed symbolic entity) is authorised to mediate or stand in for the fact that consolidation of the self is impossible despite projection onto indefinite objects. Intervention and authorisation of such an Other or logocentre (designated identity like oral narratives) results in a situation where this primary Other becomes a centre of identity while 'others' that do not fit into its character are 'othered'- excluded and pushed to the margins or the periphery. If caution is not taken, usurping the authorised Other with an Other, as is the case where colonial discourse is replaced with an assumed oral narrative Afrocentric absolute identity in the novel, results in binaries simply being duplicated.

I draw from the above theories and utilise images in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) to demonstrate that fixation on terms such as 'identity' (with its implied absoluteness) facilitates 'othering' and exclusion. This can be extended to the fixation of images in the novel to oral narrative absolute identity (signified) because images in the novel are articulated in a more complex manner that cannot refer to anything absolute. Insistence on fixed identity or oral narrative identity creates a situation in which centre/and periphery (margins within margins) are replicated, designating the centre (identity and the signified) as the all 'seeing eye' (Bhabha, 2004; Bal, 2009) that makes decisions while 'others' are excluded, spoken for and reduced to silence

(Spivak, 1988).[3] In reality, the top-down perspective by the centre makes them blind and shortsighted to the extent that they have no idea what is really happening in the periphery. We observe this in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) where the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in particular and society in general purport to speak on behalf of street kids but this is ineffective because the children are not allowed to speak for themselves. This complication, related to creating a logocentre, as envisioned by the NGOs' relation with street kids in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019), illustrates the challenges of designating any form of identity to images in the novel. This includes oral narrative images (as identity) because they would be speaking on behalf of images in the novel preventing the images from fully enunciating themselves. In addition, the centre (voice of authority), 'comprador intelligentsia' (Appiah, 1991) or 'guardians of the margins' (Ray, 2009), are too interested in self-definition to realise that the identity they create (Symbolic Other) does not match with the characters at the periphery. As a result, I examine how names in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019), which are often pre-inscribed, alienate and exclude the subject (images in the novel) from its own identity (which is an irreducible void) (Lacan, 1992). It must further be noted that the definiteness of the centre and the centre/periphery binary is dismantled by the fact that the 'other' or periphery is not as passive as the centre assumes and returns the top-down gaze of the centre with something other than what is expected. These views illuminate the need to engage with the silence or assumed passivity of the margins without necessarily reducing them to absolute identity and misrecognition with an absolute entity such as oral narratives.

Furthermore, I explore Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) idea related to substituting the term 'identity' (and oral narrative fixity) as a category of analysis with infinite 'other' possible idioms. This is because a single term or alternative idiom would be as overburdened as 'identity' if all instances of signification in the novel where lumped on it. I use these idioms as broad categories to guide my exploration of other 'others' (other than oral narrative equivalents) that are articulated in novels such as Serpel's (2019) *The Old Drift*. In addition, I examine how such images (emerging 'others') challenge the fixity of oral narrative identity when they do not fit neatly into such a category of interpretation. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) delineate the following groups of idioms as categories of analysis using terms that are often associated with the functions of identity but are not equivalent to the all-encompassing term 'identity'. The categories include 'identification and

categorisation'; 'self-understanding and social position'; 'commonality, connectedness and groupness' (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). The first idiom, identification and categorisation challenges the static term 'identity' by envisioning an active process where people and by extension images in the novel are continuously being articulated or called upon to identify themselves in different contexts (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). This opens up analysis of images in the novel to (other) different articulations that would be ignored if images were considered passive subscribers to fixed oral narrative identity. I argue that novels, such as Serpel's (2019) *The Old Drift* expose 'other' others – identity other than the preferred oral narrative as illustrated by the merging of different genres (history, science fiction and fairy tale).

I also examine whether images born out of active identification and categorisation remain static over time and space as observed in variations of the Rapunzel fairy tale (Tatar, 2004) in *The Old Drift* (Serpel, 2019). I propose that due to these other 'others' having varied identity (and their own othering relations), images in the novel must be viewed as made up of divided essences and not absolute identity. Such a view point influences my three interpretations of the dam on the Zambezi River in *The Old Drift* (Serpel, 2019) which includes ecocritical perspectives (Watts, 2009) that would otherwise be ignored if one focuses on linearity and movement of frozen images from oral narratives. This also means that we consider the images as having only beginnings but no origin because, as we observe in the corrupted myths of origin in *The Old Drift* (Serpel, 2019), origins are always infiltrated sources. This observation over the non-existence of origins and centres of meaning or identity is at the core of Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) other alternative idiom (for identity) comprising commonness, connectedness and groupness, which advises that the three terms cannot be trapped in the term absolute identity. My concern is what happens in situations where the term identity fails to encompass cases in which analysis demands the exclusion or addition of certain terms depending on the context. This is what I examine in the ambiguity and variability related to articulation of the subject 'I' in *The Old Drift* (Serpel, 2019) and the related impossibility of articulating an absolute identity. Therefore, I analyse whether, because of perpetual identification, production of other 'others' as divided essences without origin, images in the novel must be considered incapable of exhibiting absolute identity of anything including oral narratives. This is because the desire for identity (of images in the novel) is also a desire for another subject's desire (discourse on linearity), which, according to Lacan (1992), is

impossible and amounts to nothing because inherent helplessness resides where identity should be.

Related to the previous view is Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) alternative idiom relating to 'self-understanding' and 'social location', which challenges absolute identity by envisioning a kind of subjectivity whereby one identifies themselves in full cognizance of the social context in which they are. This relates to the relationship between oral narratives and images in the novel because often times the relationship between the two is assumed to be an objective signifier/signified relationship. On the contrary, the idiom above breaks such signifier/signified binaries by suggesting that one has a choice of taking any social position they desire (either the primary Other –oral narratives or the other 'others') but with an awareness that that is not the only possibility. As observed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000, p. 17) self-understanding and social location may be related to "situated subjectivity": "one's sense of who one is, of one's social location, and of how (given the other two) one is prepared to act". For the analyst, this means that rather than fixation on oral narrative descendency, one must be cognisant of the context and position of images in the wider context of novels, both spatially and temporally. For instance, one may recognise that in some novels, images such as the subservient woman have been, in theory and practice, taken as part of recapturing a pristine indigenous tradition (and oral narrative). Yet, in another case, a portrayal of a woman in a different way, such as Serpel's (2019) image of a woman as assertive and decision maker in *The Old Drift*, shows that the image must not be ignored simply because it does not fit the image of pre-colonial indigenous oral narrative (tradition) image. Instead, the image may be considered from a different perspective, such as from deconstruction or writing back to the oral narrative subservient position of women. The opening up of analysis of the image of women to perspectives, other than the recapturing of indigenous tradition or writing back to the west, demonstrates an element of self-reflexity (Mwangi, 2009) that departs from a fixed identity and analysis of images in the novel. That is why I suggest that understanding (self-understanding) is not related to forced identity or imagined pristine culture, but is dependent on the role an image plays in the novel. Hence, in a situation where African contemporary writing has shifted from purely nationalist aims (Dimitriu, 2006) to more self-reflexive and social constructive approaches to images than before, I suggest that one considers 'other' roles images may take in the novel. Heinze's (2007, pp. 197-198) comments over the 'overcoat' image in Lahiri's (2004) *The*

Namesake is pertinent to my proposal concerning the view that identity is made up of ever-changing (like the overcoat) identity (roles) of images in the novel depending on one's positioning (McGowan, 2007) and interaction.

6.2.0 *The Mourning Bird*
This novel is about a girl named Chimuka whose life changes tremendously after she loses her father to HIV/AIDS at the age of ten. The surviving family, which includes her mother and two brothers (Kufekisa and Alisinda), is left homeless after the protagonist's paternal relatives grab their property and the landlord evicts them after her mother fails to keep up with rentals. Chimuka's mother commits suicide after failing to cope with her ill health, younger son's (Kufekisa) death, and poverty. Chimuka moves in with her aunt, Bo Nyambe, where she stays for a short time because her uncle Bo Sitali has been raping her. She joins her younger brother Ali living on the street but soon enters prostitution with a fellow street kid named Enala that she befriends. The story ends with the protagonist at a rehabilitation centre called Tikondane after being introduced to the centre by a male character named Elisha that runs it with his wife.

6.2.1 'Margins within Margins' and Images in *The Mourning Bird*
Oral narrative mnemonic images in the novel cannot signify self-sufficient identity related to oral narratives because such a fixation creates margins within margins. This is because the fixation on orality is propagated by scholars (Onwumere & Egbulonu, 2014; Maggio, 2007; Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001) that have designated themselves 'guardians' that speak for the margins (at the margin) while assuming that representations and the readership in the margin (novel's images) passively await guidance and identification. The guardians position themselves at the centre while excluding those that do not embody similar beliefs to the periphery or margins. This is noted in the way novels and images that do not fit into oral narrative identity are excluded as not African enough (Mazrui, 1976). Arraham and First (2006) delineate the centre as a space where decisions are made and collective boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are made by those that possess the power to do so. This is reminiscent of Said's (1978) dichotomy of the orient and occident where the balance of power weighs heavily in favour of the occident as the centre that creates and determines the discourse by which the orient views itself and viewed by others. As a result, signifiers that do not possess the centre's beliefs or "[do] not belong to the set of juridical

obligations and prerogatives that stipulate citizenry" (Butler, 2007, p. 6) are excluded and pushed to the margin.

Similarly, in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) we observe Non-Governmental Organisations that have designated themselves as spokespersons (centre) for the street kids, end up creating margins within margins. This is because the NGOS pretend to identify with the street kids in the margins of society when they speak for them. They end up creating a margin (within the larger 'inclusive' margin they have created) because their discourse excludes (marginalises) rather than includes the street kids' perspective. In this case, the NGOs and by extension the theorists and novelists that propagate the linearity discourse at the centre may be viewed in the light of the symbolic law (in Lacan terms) that creates and institutes the symbolic Phallus (oral narrative discourse) as the preferred desire (identity) of the subject (the novel's images). This creates a situation where the phallus (as absolute signified of the subject), is guarded and perpetuated using collective boundaries created by the centre. In the street kids' case, the NGOs end up commodifying and perpetually excluding the children from the centre while inscribing pre-conceived identity on them. This is observed in the way the NGOs come with cameras and food in the name of campaigning for equal rights on behalf of the street kids but the gestures, photos and videos are a strategy used to source grants. For this reason, there is need to address the peripheries and engage with the other identity that lies in the silence or suppression caused by fixation on the identity of the centre. Without such an intervention, the street kids (with only the NGOs (centre's) commodified identity to look to) cannot be considered fully articulated. The incomplete articulation of the street kids' identity means that the term 'identity' literally fails to provide us with an absolute entity that can refer to an equally absolute oral narrative identity. It is for this reason that Brubaker and Cooper (2000) deem the term 'identity' problematic as a tool or category of analysis because it does not guarantee complete coverage of what it identifies. Such views are pertinent to the deconstruction of oral narrative discourse on linearity and its attendant desire to subvert Eurocentric tendencies by presenting images in the novel as an absolute reflection of oral narrative images (identity) in the novel. This is noted from the complication one observes with the emergence of margins (street kids) within margins (the African novel and its images) in an image (NGOs and street kids) that is supposed to be an absolute entity representing the oral narrative linearity and 'identity' as a centralised Other. On the contrary, oral narrative Other as a

centre of the novel is bound to disintegrate when images such as the one relating to street kids in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) fails to provide an absolute identity desired by the centre leading to its exclusion –'us' and 'them'– margins within the margin.

It is pertinent to note that the view that oral narrative mnemonic images in the novel embody indigenous Zambian identity is challenged by the inadvertent creation and revelation of centre/periphery binaries. This is because the periphery's (images that are not influenced by oral narratives) reference point for self-identification is the centre (oral narrative identity) at the expense of anything else that is obscured and pushed to the margins in the process. One observes a similar creation of binaries by an identity-seeking centre in the hypocritical behaviour by NGOs that are supposed to speak for the street kids in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019). Relatedly, Musila (2008) demonstrates how rumours meant to subvert the official discourse surrounding Julie Ward's death in Kenya, reveal centre-periphery binaries within the local society. Rumours were meant to be the voice (that speaks for the unrecognised discourse of the margin) and local perspectives left out in the Eurocentric and orientalist-influenced official version of the murder. Yet, the rumours, particularly the portrayal of Julie Ward as a 'sexual object', demonstrate centre/periphery divisions of the local community (margin) –local patriarchal attitudes where men (centre) define women (and hence in the periphery) on their terms. Similarly, the NGOS in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) who are supposed to be representing and speaking on behalf of the street kids (within the former colony as a margin) end up pushing them into the periphery of society while remaining at the centre. These organisations purport to campaign for equal opportunities for street kids and the rest of the society. The protagonist, Chimuka, explains how they visit the streets in "bright T-shirts with even brighter words, proclaiming 'HELP THE STREET-KIDS CAMPAIGN,'…offering fervent prayers, cautious hugs and plastic plates of food" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 120).

Ironically, Chimuka observes that the gap between the street kids and the rest of society remains and that, instead "those people with their plastic smiles…gave and stole the hope that they would take me to this home and I would have a place to live again. They didn't" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 114). The hypocrisy demonstrated here and the fact that the NGOs came to the streets with camera crews, in addition to unfulfilled promises, suggests commodification and othering of the street kids. This is similar to the romantic glorification of the noble savage (Luciano & Tosta,

2011) or how according to Musila (2008), the Masai in Kenya are considered a tourist spectacle all for the benefit of the subjects and not the objects – the noble savage and the Masai. I therefore note that, the street kids, just as the noble savage and the Masai, can be viewed as an outward projection qua 'other' on which the NGO as centre narcissistically impose identities they circumscribe. We observe how the term 'identity' collapses on itself in both cases because it is bias towards an orientalist or NGO view of the Masai and the street kids. As a result, a term which does not account for all aspects of what it identifies but thrives on the creation of collective boundaries while excluding (marginalising) what does not fit into them cannot be trusted as an analytical category (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). Hence, fixation on self-identity (even in the margins) creates centre/periphery binaries, which are reflected in the objectification and marginalisation of the street kids by the NGO's (subject) – institutions that are supposed to be speaking on their behalf. This means the images have no identity except as the outward projected object of oral narrative identity in a similar way that the street kids only have identity in relation to their ability to satisfy the NGOs desire for a street kid image created by them. Therefore, insistence on projecting oral narrative identity on images in the novel creates a centre (discourse on orality) and the periphery or other (novel's image) on which the centre forcefully inscribes identity.

Furthermore, attempts to move from the margin to the centre (as custodian of identity) becomes movement from one margin to another because the sought after centre remains an irreducible abstract identity created by the centre. This links with my argument that decolonialist attempts to inscribe (centralise identity) oral narrative images on images in the novel becomes a movement from one margin to another where more margins within the margin are created and exposed, thus complicating the decolonialist cause. In *The Mourning Bird*, Chimuka, located in the margins of society, realises that her movement from the street to prostitution does not transform her identity in the way she imagined it would. Through her we witness the frustration, challenges and lack of fulfilment one experiences when they approach identification (using the noun identity) as something tangible or absolute that someone finds after searching for it (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). It is in the light of such a contradiction that marginality must not be considered spatially but as an irreducibility of "uncertainty of identity, feelings, of inferiority scorn for one's own culture and society" (Samal, 2015, p. 123). The indirect proportionality of the movement from

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'margin' to 'centre' and the related identity is espoused in Kral's (2007) observation about the family in Ali's (2006) *Brick Lane* that moves from their home, Bangladesh (which is marginal) to the United Kingdom in the hope of being at the centre (of identity). After staying in a small British town for 30 years still unsatisfied, Charm, the head (and protagonist of the novel) of the migrant family extends his search for central identity to London but still feel marginalised even here. This means that margin is not a place but a feeling of marginalisation one experiences even when located at the designated centre. In a way similar to Charm's movement from margin to margin without finding central identity (at the centre), Chimuka, as portrayed in *The Mourning Bird*, realises that movement from the streets to prostitution does not bring her closer to self-identity or satisfaction. She feels cheated by her friend's promises of a better life in prostitution and muses that: "Enala was wrong. Having a place to stay did not make me stop the glue. I craved it more. I had to continue sniffing it. It drowned out the sounds of the grunting men. Since we had food, it just numbed out the pain" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, pp. 140-141). Chimuka's continuous cravings for glue is a metaphorical indicator that she is still located in the margin despite having physically moved from the street (under the bridge). She soon discovers that the world of prostitution is ruled by Rudo the madam and her clients, in a way similar to the boys, such as Saviour and the NGOs that belonged to the centre (seat of power), when she was a street kid (Kalimamukwento, 2019). Furthermore, Chimuka's disappointment that the man (Elisha) who had reached out to her is married quashes all her fantasies of a fairy tale ending, when she eventually ends up at the Tikondane rehabilitation centre. Hence, Chimuka finds herself located in the margins of whichever place she stays –whether as a street kid, prostitute or rehabilitated prostitute at the Tikondane centre. This is in a way similar to Ali's (Ali, 2006) protagonist, Charm mentioned earlier, who fails to find absolute central identity in London the designated centre (of identity) in *Brick Lane*. The fact that Chimuka and by extension Charm in our example above, does not find self-affirmation but marginal status (uncertainty) in any of the three places she moves to suggests the irreducibility of identity. For this reason, the decolonialist (nationalist) search for an oral narrative equivalent in the novel must be viewed as a vicious cycle from one margin to another because identity is always characterised by a marginal feeling of helplessness and failure to encompass everything that needs to be identified.

Analysis of images in the novel that is fixed on a signified, such as oral narrative mnemonic images, results in a failure to appreciate the 'other' (novel) except in light of a forced identity. This is because the centre (discourse on oral linearity) foregrounds their perspective and projects it on 'other' objects as the only authorised identity –'seeing from top down' (Bhabha, 2004; Bal, 2009). On the contrary, one observes from society and men's treatment of street kids and prostitutes in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) that, the 'seeing eye' is myopic and blind because it sees only as far as what it knows (the discourse it inscribes) (Koff, 2004) or deems some objects invisible. The idea of the 'all seeing eye' is the basis of colonial oppression and Musila (2008, p. 71), echoing Said's (1978) orientalism, observes that the system was made in such a way that the construction of Africa as irrational and childlike was legalised and used as justification for empiricist activities. The legitimisation of the West as the 'seeing eye' is similar to the Lacanian (Lacan, 1992) subject's (linearity discourse) view that his or her gaze (inscription of oral narrative identity on images in the novel) is the absolute authority and identity. Yet, the fact that society's view of the street kids in *The Mourning Bird* is superficial and shortsighted challenges the authority of the 'all seeing eye'. We observe for instance that street kids are often ignored by society and that is why Chimuka confesses that "THEY WERE INVISIBLE BEFORE" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 104) because she only realises their existence when she joins them. Furthermore, when society actually recognises the street kids it is often from a misinformed and hence shortsighted perspective. Chimuka confirms the short-sightedness in her observation that: "I never saw them until I became one of them. They were not the children on the billboards littered around the city. The ones that warned: 'DO NOT GIVE ALMS'" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 104). The fact that Chimuka only recognises the street kids and their true nature when she becomes a part of them means caution must be taken before designating identity without engaging with the object. For oral narratives and the novel, this means an assumption that oral narrative images inscribe identity of images in the novel must preclude engagement with images in the novel. Other than that, we risk a theoretical assumption such as the discourse on orality and its blind assumption that images in the novel passively subscribe to oral narratives as an uncontested centre of identity.

One further notes how the wilful decision to marginalise or render certain images in the novel invisible while others are illuminated leads to a one sided and inadequate view of images in the novel. This extends to a situation where one decides to only take note of images that they feel

embody indigenous oral narratives and exclude others that do not. The result is a myopic (as opposed to 'seeing eye') analysis that does not reflect an eclectic and thorough identification of any image in the novel. In the *Mourning Bird* this kind of selective myopia is related to the way Chimuka is viewed by her clients when she becomes a prostitute. She narrates that: "they didn't recognise me because none of them ever looked at my face. They licked my breasts. Stared at my bum. Squeezed the soft parts of my stomach…in the poorly lit rooms of the lodges, the back of cars, behind finished buildings, it was hard to tell. I was invisible" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 140). The fact that Chimuka's clients have objectified and identify her only as an object of their desire, makes them blind to who she really is. It is for this reason that they cannot recognise her during the day when she is dressed normally, although Chimuka recognises them. The danger with such a gaze that is fixed on some aspects at the expense of others is that it results in a partial and inadequate description of an object. Hence, images born from such narrow sighted analysis related to the men's (all seeing eye) treatment of Chimuka in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) cannot refer to any absolute identity of anything including oral narratives. It is on this basis that I argue that a narrow sighted view that is based only on oral narrative ancestry and an absolute 'identity' cannot justify an absolute ascendency of images in the novel from oral narratives.

Furthermore, the top-down inscription of 'identity' by oral narrative discourse on the novel's images means that the novel is not given a chance or space to enunciate (speak) itself. This is because the 'seeing eye' (discourse on orality) speaks for the novel's images and denies them a voice of their own. Thus, we observe how Chimuka is continuously raped and threatened to silence by her aunt's husband, Bo Sitali, and later by Saviour the street kid. As Maggio (2007, p. 422) observes, "The amalgamation of the two notions of representation establishes a silencing of the subaltern. They can never speak because they are both being "stood for' and embodied by others in the dominant discourse." This creates a problem concerning the identity of images in the novel because there is a gap created by the fact that the identity they have is one that is forced on them. This means that the term identity as a point of reference is problematic here because it fails to account for all aspects it claims to identify. A fixation on such an identity means the subjects would be reduced to silence and their voice silenced because they would not have an input and/or choice but to accept the forced identity. The first time Bo Sitali rapes Chimuka in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019), is accompanied by the silencing of her. During the act, he tells her

to "stop making noise…An instruction…A threat. A sob stuck in my throat and strangled me…and he moaned when I winced and held my hand over my mouth to choke my screams, but I was silent. I lost my voice in the pain and focused on the ending" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 99). The metaphorical strangulation Chimuka experiences here and later when Saviour the street kid that has laid claim on her, continues to defile her on the streets and threatens to kill her if she tells (Kalimamukwento, 2019), makes it impossible for her to speak out. In fact, Chimuka's inability to speak out is further complicated by the fact that Chimuka's aunt silences her with accusations of seductress and husband snatcher when the opportunity to speak out about Bo Sitali presents itself. Chimuka's aunt, Bo Nyambe, chases her without giving her a chance to speak and she leaves the house with an identity (false identity) that has been forcefully inscribed on her. This forced identity is similar to the ego which, when internalised by the subject becomes a 'wall of language' that prevents each subject from fully speaking with the Other….the subject's unconscious full speech about his true desire and as the subject speaking to the Other conscious subject" (Chiesa, 2007, p. 40). Therefore, Bo Sitali and Saviour inscribe the identity of sexual object while metaphorically 'strangling' Chimuka's own voice. Bo Nyambe further creates a wall (with the identity of seductress) that makes Chimuka unable to express herself. By extension, one recognises that the forceful inscription of identity on Chimuka is similar to the oral narrative claim on images in the novel because the images' voice is strangled and denied expression. Such an identity, which is based on non-disclosure related to forced silence and fixation on an absolute identity from oral narratives, cannot be relied on to provide absolute identity of images in the novel on oral narrative images.

Therefore, there is need to engage with the subject's (novel's images) silence before inscribing any fixed oral narrative identity on it. Our inability to hear the subject speak is concealed by the insistence on a privileged identity (at the centre and by the centre) at the expense of the voice that may be speaking in the background (at the margins). Therefore, while the intention would be to create a voice for the margin, the fact that the voice is located at the centre by the centre means this might end up creating margins within the margin. This is because the proponents of the discourse or voice on orality designate themselves as the centre or voice for the margin without engaging the novel and its images that may not fit the discourse. Yet, the novel's images are not passive recipients but return the gaze (McGowan, 2007), while one fixes the gaze (of oral narrative

images) on the subject (images in the novel) instead. This is depicted in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) through Chimuka's use of silence as wilful resistance or withholding (Ray, 2009) and her utilisation of internalised speech when it becomes clear that no one will hear her if she speaks out. The question then is not whether the subject is speaking, but whether the subject is being heard (Maggio, 2007). There is need to ask ourselves the following questions about images in the novel (subject): What does the unconscious subject say, and what does he want? (Chiesa, 2007, p. 40). This is because the conscious subject is subjected to the identity of the symbolic Other but this fixity means the unconscious, which comprises everything else that the subject can be, is silenced or repressed. There is need for a contrapuntal[4] approach that considers both the conscious subject's authorised identity and the unconscious, silent and repressed identity. For instance, Chimuka wilfully returns the gaze of authorised discourse in silence as a way of refuting its imposition of identity. She resists the discourse of her father's death through the conviction that if no one explicitly says it, the news of his death will not be true (Kalimamukwento, 2019). Later in the narrative, she convinces herself that if she tells her aunt that her uncle has been raping her it will become real but if she "doesn't say it, it would be like it didn't happen" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 100). In both cases, the refusal by Chimuka to allow speech (the authority of her father's speech and the reality of the rape) to control her is a pertinent illustration of how silence can make a statement without literal speech (wilful withholding or resistance).

Furthermore, it only becomes possible to negotiate Chimuka's silence when one focuses on the internalised speech she uses. We observe how she internally contemplates telling her aunt about her uncle's actions or when her aunt finally chases her and yet she is outwardly silent. Similarly, when Elisha from Tikondane rehabilitation interviews her about her life, she does not say so much outwardly but inside she is speaking to herself and reflecting upon her life (Kalimamukwento, 2019). One may conclude that Chimuka resorts to silent resistance and internalised speech as a way of avoiding the interference and restrain of the dominant discourse. Similarly, I suggest that analysis of images in the novel must include a consideration of what is obtaining in the silent gap created by the mandate of oral narrative discourse, in like manner to Chimuka's identity that can be negotiated by engaging her silent endeavours. Therefore, one may note that although margins are created within the margin (Zambian literature) an eclectic analysis can only be effective by breaking the dichotomy between orality discourse and the marginalised images. This is the gap or

margin created when images that are considered to subscribe to oral narrative ascendency are included and those that do not are excluded or marginalised. Hence, there is need to deconstruct images in the novel so as to determine where the discourse on orality collapses on itself revealing a speaking silence (images in the margin that do not subscribe to oral narrative discourse) that cannot be restricted to oral narrative identity.

6.2.2 Names and Mis-matched Identity in *The Mourning Bird*

The inability of the identity of oral narrative mnemonic images to map themselves absolutely onto images in the novel can be likened to the failure of names in *The Mourning Bird* to always match characteristics of the objects they are purported to identify. The relationship between names and the objects they represent is a common mnemonic aid for both story teller and audience in oral communities where memorability of narratives depends on cues such as names (Vansina, 1985; Ong, 2002). The insistance of this mnemonic method in the novel may be viewed as an inscription of power for both indigenous oral narratives and its attendent culture. Related to this, Nyambi and Mangena (2016) caution that inscription of power related to the restoration of pre-colonial culture through literal abrogation of colonial toponyms and other names must be approached with caution. This is because it has become common for "post-independence African governments to mistake or deliberately project the total erasure of [colonial] names with colonial baggage as 'the' evidence of transformation" (Nyambi & Mangena, 2016, p. 6). On the contrary, substitution of one name for another does not always inscribe desired power when reality does not match the theoretical hopes (Meyiwa & Maseti, 2016) of the people that inscribe a name on a place. Furthermore, the power of names over what they are purpoted to name is challenged in novels such as *The Mourning Bird* where the idea of absolute identity and ascription to oral narratives is challenged by the fact that names and characteristics of elements such as the setting of storytelling do not necessorily match. An important metanarrative in the novel is how 'oral narratives' in the novel do not characteristically match with the indigenous 'oral narrative' (oral tale). This is because of the following: "The name for example is a signifier which has often been selected long before the child's birth, and which inscribes the child in the symbolic. A prior name has nothing to do with the subject –it is foreign to him or her as any signifier" (Fink, 2003, p. 243). The inductive fixation of oral narratives onto every Zambian novel in English is in many ways similar to the name (symbolic law) that exists before a child is fully aware of the world. The child (who does not know that the name is imposed) fits into the role the name assigns to it and in so doing becomes the non-

identity (false identity) that obscures the child's actual identity beneath (Fink, 2003). For instance, indigenous Zambian and African oral narratives are commonly identified as stories told in the village especially around the fire (Finnegan, 2012; Cancel, 2013). However, the fact that oral narratives in *The Mourning Bird* are not restricted to the village but told by Chimuka and her father in a modern and urban setting refutes the idea of a fixed oral narrative told around the fire. Chimuka recalls herself sitting on the floor in the sitting room listening to her father's indigenous oral narrative about the hyena that sat under a tree for shade but died of hunger because it did not notice the mango fruits in the tree above it (Kalimamukwento, 2019). In addition, the story opens with the indigenous oral narrative call and response pattern: "the opening pattern Lizazi leo, he started, once upon a time. Sha? Yes? Ali and I replied" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 30). However, the fact that this oral narrative is told by both Chimuka's father in a modern home and later by Chimuka to the children at Tikondane rehabilitation centre challenges the entrapment of modern oral narratives by the indigenous oral narrative setting. Hence, the fact that the name 'oral narrative' in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) does not evoke a preconceived notion of a 'story by the fireside' in the village means that images in the novel are not always a slavish imitation of oral narratives.

The misrecognition and exclusion of images related to fixation on names complicates the idea that this oral narrative mnemonic technique is always identified with the novel. The tendency to associate names of people and things to particular characteristics often results in misinterpretation and misrecognition of images in the novel. This is explicit in *The Mourning Bird* where the power that names are assumed to hold over identity is broken down by charaterisitics that do not match the names of characters such as Chimuka. In this case, a name may be considered in the light of the Lacanian ego's relationship with the subject's identity. This is because once the ego is introjected as the first institution of identity of the self, it is soon alienated or projected towards an ideal ego (s) in successive attempts at self identity. In *The Mourning Bird* the protagonist's birth name, Chimuka, may be considered as the first inscription or 'identity' Chimuka has. It must be noted that this name given to Chimuka by her parents, like the ego is already a symbolised 'other' when first introjected by the subject because a child projects its identity on a world and objects that already belong to the symbolic (Chiesa, 2007). Yet, one observe's how the name loses its power to identify and is projected outwards when Chimuka completes her change of 'identity'

with a change of name from Chimuka to Mary when she becomes a prostitute. Her belief in the power of the new name over her identity as a prostitute is evidenced in the observation of how the name becomes more believable to her as she uses it more while simultaneously entering deeper into its associated role (prostitution). This is evident in her statement that: "I used the name so many times I would have answered quickly had someone called me by it" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 151). The fact that Chimuka easily changes her name to Mary when she becomes a prostitute undermines the authority of a name and identity on objects and calls for a more flexible approach to the relationship between names and objects. We can infer that oral narrative naming practices cannot lay absolute claim on the way names function in the novel because, as observed with Chimuka, names can easily be substituted and do not always signifiy what they name and hence cannot signify any absolute image or practice.

Misrecognition of images related to the failure by names to gurantee matching characteristics of objects they name means naming is not as efficient a mnemonic aid in the novel as it is in oral narratives. This nullifies the claims on the linear continuation of oral narrative mnemonic techniques from oral narratives to the novel. The correlation between names (ego) and subject's identity is a common mnemonic image in oral narratives and it cannot be overstated. This is evidenced in one particular indigenous narrative where three wives named *Ntoole* (pick up), *Mweo* (life), *Nunde* (mend) are able to bring their husband to life when they work together, picking up his remains (ntoole), mending him (ndunde) and breathing life into him (Mweo) (Cancel, 2013). While this may be the case in oral narratives, the insistence on pairing names with identity is similar to the ego's refusal to step away from the subject and pave way for 'others' (Chiesa, 2007). This is exemplified by the fact that Chimuka wants Elisha from Tikondane rehabilitation centre to identify her by her birth name when she first meets him. This is because, the birth names is not associated with the 'other person' (Mary) and cannot be related to the image of 'Mary the boss of sex' (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 151) spray painted on the wall outside her home. In a self-reflexive tone she wanted to tell him that "this is not who I had always been…I am different. I am Chimuka Grace Mwiya' (Kalimamukwento, 2019, pp. 166-167). Yet, one observes that the name Mary and its textual association with prostitution is simply an 'other' of her birth name (in this case the ego). The misrecognition and uncertainty is related to the fact that Chimuka cannot recognise herself as Chimuka when she becomes a prostitute as evidenced by her failure to

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recognise herself in the mirror when she first dresses as a prostitute. This is further evidenced by her failure to recognise herself as Mary when she decides to stop prostitution and in both cases the misrecognition and uncertainty reflects a name's inability to always keep up with someone's identity in novels. It also means that while names work well as oral narrative mnemonic devices they do not always work the same way in novels as noted in *The Mourning bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) where they lead to the misrecogntion and uncertainity we observe in Chimuka. For this reason images in the novel, such as people's names, cannot always be identified with their oral narrative counterparts.

It is pertinent to note that there is need to consider images in the novel as fragmented and not unified entities that are fixed on oral narrative identity. This means we need to consider that images are comprised of various pieces that are perpetually moving in and out of new relationships without being permanently stuck to any bounded category. The position requires one to take the post-modern view that rapid changes in modern life have resulted in the fragmentation of the human psyche (Booker, 2007). We observe such fragmentation in *The Mourning Bird* where Chimuka's life is characterised by rapid changes that make definite and permanent identity impossible. Attempts to fixate such a subject on a pre-ordained identity or name indicates a random consumption of aspects of the past and this "reduces the past to a series of spectacles, a collection of images disconnected from any genuine sense of historical process" (Booker, 2007, p. xvi). This can be related to the way the discourse on orality narcissistically consumes or engulfs anything that has the semblance of indigenous orality and gives it the fixed identity of orality without consideration of existing circumstances. As a result, if one attempts to designate any identity to Chimuka they would have to consider the fragments related to the circumstances surrounding her life change from one status to another so quickly that definite identity eludes it. Chimuka moves from a happy school-going child with a stable family and home, to a fatherless character, when her father dies, and homeless after her relatives grab all the property in her home. She also encounters forced movement to a small house in an impoverished compound when her mother fails to pay rent. In no time, her young brother dies and her mother quickly follows, after overdosing on pills. Her stay at Bo Nyambe's house is short lived when her uncle begins to rape her forcing her aunt to chase her and she becomes a street kid, a prostitute and eventually ends up at the Tikondane rehabilitation centre. The fact that these changes take place swiftly, in the space

of less than ten years is symbolic of the fragmented pieces (without unified form) that make up Chimuka's life.

Furthermore, I argue that the author mainly uses the stream of consciousness to narrate Chimuka's story as a fragmented aspect (without definite identity) in order to reflect the randomness and fragmentation of human thought and identity. On one hand, one observes how the narrative moves interchangeably from Chimuka's mind to reality. On the other hand, we note the back and forth movements between past, present and future. At one moment in the novel she is informed of her father's death and another moment, she starts thinking back to a time before her father died or was sick and when they would talk about her future. Soon after this, the story goes back (ahead) to the funeral. The swift movement and changes of Chimuka's life and the stream of consciousness technique used to narrate them leads to the conclusion that one can only define Chimuka by the fragmented pieces that make up her life. Yet, the conglomeration of the different fragments means that she has no unified identity that can lend her a designated name –she is neither an innocent girl, prostitute, nor street kid at the end of the novel. Hence, images in the novel, in a similar way to Chimuka's identity that is fragmented but nameless, do not stay in one place long enough to be permanently bound to a specific identity such as oral narratives.

Therefore, I propose a position of identity that identifies with a preferred image in full cognisance of otherness that may arise at any time to taint the purity of such an image. This is a departure from the discourse on linearity based on the misconstrued notion of oral narrative images that are passed on to the novel and remain pure and frozen regardless of other identities that emerge in the novel. One observes how Chimuka prefers to soak herself in images related to her past life while acknowledging her present life –the otherness that has disrupted her life. This is akin to the psychoanalytic view that:

> there is an unconscious subject whose reasoning, far from simply being identifiable with sheer irrationality does not coincide with the ego-nor…with the ego-related dimension of self-consciousness-and which manifests itself in phenomena such as dreams, bungled actors, slips of the tongue and psychosomatic symptoms. (Chiesa, 2007, p. 14)

One realises that there is, on one hand, the identity that is related to the ego (authorised self) but, on the other hand, there is the other self, which the subject recognises and is more aware of and

prefers (self-conscious self). Chimuka in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019), prefers the self-conscious identity (fantasy and dreams) because it allows her to live her past life in the present. Many times she occupies herself with crossword puzzles at Bo Nyambes place and mentions that "secretly scrawling out the words in the newspaper brought Tate close to me" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, p. 95). Later she narrates how "Recreating that part of my life, with those stories, made the possibility of having a healthy life seem real again. When I told those stories, the black stains in my clothes and the deep cracks in the soles of my feet disappeared. In those stories" (Kalimamukwento, 2019, pp. 171-172). However, the fact that she does not resist when Bo Nyambe grabs the newspaper from her and understands the illusory nature of her recreated stories demonstrates her acknowledgement of an Other reality (the present). In this way, Chimuka's ability to harness both her preferred past identity (Derrida, 1974) and the present reality demonstrates her ability to tolerate otherness while avoiding the destructive hold that a fixed identity such as orphan and street kid may have on her. Only by doing what Chimuka does will one be able to harness both the oral narrative images and other images in the novel. In addition, one would avoid a situation where one oppressive discourse is simply replaced by another (Said, 1978; Stuart, 1977) as is the case with the ego being replaced by the symbolic Other in Lacanian psychoanalysis. Hence, I suggest that there is need to approach images in the novel not with a fixation on oral narrative identity but with more tolerance to other images that arise in the novel.

6.3 *The Old Drift*

The story describes the lives of three generations of three families originating from the Old Drift (In the Southern part of Northern Rhodesia) whose lives spread throughout Northern Rhodesia and across borders. It is narrated by a buzzing multitude that double as narrator and commentator or chorus and is an interwoven tapestry of epic, myth, fairy tale, romance and science fiction. We witness how the families become linked through politics, intermarriage, illicit affairs, pregnancies and the fight against HIV/AIDS over a period of approximately 100 years. For instance, two of the grandmothers in the story end up at the Old Drift firstly when Sibilla and Fredrico elope and flee to The Old Drift and when Ronald and Agnes flee England because Agnes' parents will not allow her to get married to Ronald because he is black. Among the children, Leonel ends up having two children (Joseph and Jacob) with two different women when he marries Thandiwe and has an affair with Silvia, a prostitute, whom he uses as a subject for his research on creating an HIV/AIDS

vaccine. One of the grandmothers, Matha, and her mother Bernadetta before her are actively involved in the 1950's and 1960's guerrilla war for national liberation led by a character called Ba Nkoloso. The three families are eventually united by the love triangle among the three grandchildren, Joseph, Jacob and Naila who become politically charged with the desire to put up a rebellion (the second Cha Cha Cha) and sabotage of the national communication system (Beads) using mosquito sized drones created by Joseph. The three are further involved in a love triangle that leads to Naila dying during childbirth without the knowledge of who between the two boys fathered the child. This is after the sabotage fails resulting in a flood that covers the whole country with a few survivors that remain hoarded on the island of Lusaka that is formed in the process.

6.3.1 Other 'others' and Images in *The Old Drift*

Oral narrative images in the novel cannot be considered as solely referring to oral narratives without considering the presence of aspects other than oral narrative influence - other idioms ('others') in the novel. This includes 'other' images that are enunciated in the space of the novel while the 'identity' or images in the novel, are forced and fixed on indigenous oral narrative images. My suggestion here is related to Brubaker and Coopers' (2000) idea that we do away with binding categories of analysis such as 'identity' and by extension oral narrative fixity of images in the novel. This is because such categories tend to fail when they cannot encompass all that is happening in the novel. This applies to the interweaving of different genres and the changeability of images over time in *The Old Drift* (Serpel, 2019), which makes it difficult for the novel to fit neatly into a single novelistic genre. It is for this reason that, I liken identification of images in the novel to (Chiesa, 2007, p. 9) the Lacanian imaginary where "the ego is nothing but their sum total at a given point in time." This means that while recognising that indigenous oral narratives have an influence on some of the novel's images, identity itself (the ego in this case) must be viewed as something that does not remain constant. This is because binding images to an 'identity' may not account for all images because of other referents (other 'others') that arise in the novel. Of particular interest in *The Old Drift* is how the historical story of the Cha Cha Cha guerrilla tactic during the Zambian liberation struggle that is identifiable with a historical or political novel ('other'), is merged with science fiction (other 'other'). Interestingly, space research and philosophy at Ba Nkoloso's Zambia Academy of Science is a cover for covet anti-colonial guerrilla operations. Matha Mwamba one of the afronauts[5] (guerrilla fighter) explains that sometimes part of the liberation struggle "meant pretending to be an astronaut, giving interviews about cats,

rockets and technology to white men… Matha thought of ba Nkoloso's words: "This is a guerrilla campaign and a propaganda campaign. This is Cha-Cha-Cha!" (Serpel, 2019, p. 169). While the Cha Cha Cha would fit perfectly as part of a historical novel influenced by Zambia's liberation struggle, the inclusion of astronauts, futuristic "planet mars…populated by primitive natives" (Serpel, 2019, p. 165) as a political cover belongs to Science fiction. This observation is pertinent to our understanding that analysis that is fixed on oral narrative influence would miss the many genres that may be mixed in a particular novel such as *The Old Drift*. In this way, analysis which does not take into consideration everything that is happening and is biased towards oral narrative influence cannot claim to be an authentic analysis or linear transference of oral narrative images to the novel.

Furthermore, the movement of fixed identity over time is challenged by images such as Sibilla's story, which changes from being similar to the German fairy tale Rapunzel (Tatar, 2004) to something else over the passage of time in the novel. This illustrates an active process of identification (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) whereby images are called upon to identify with different temporal contexts. In fact, one would not observe the variations and other 'others' that may emerge if we conflated the Rapunzel fairy tale in a fixed 'identity'. According to the German fairy tale, a princess named Rapunzel is imprisoned in a high tower by a bad witch and rescued later by a handsome prince who climbs up the tower using her unusually long hair and they live happily ever after. In a similar way, Sibilla is born with unusually long hair and guides Fredrico (her love interest) to her mother's house using a trail of hair plaited into a rope, which is laid out for him to follow. Fredrico finds her, saves her from being raped by his sexually predatory brother whom he kills and then whisks Sibilla to Africa where they get married (Serpel, 2019). However, the tale diverts from the German one because Sibilla and Fredrico do not live happily ever after and their marriage soon breaks down in Northern Rhodesia (Serpel, 2019). It is evident in both the way the historical Cha Cha Cha ('other' of the actual story) is merged with the 'other' science fiction story about aliens and the diversion of the Rapunzel tale over time that the 'other' of oral narratives (images in the novel) will always evoke their own 'others'. The variability and active identification seen here (because of articulation of other places), make it difficult for one to imagine such unchangeable elements as fixed identity. In this way, the emergence of other 'others',

such as the intertwined genres or the temporal variation of the Rapunzel tale, prevent images in the novel from comprising pure identity of anything including oral narratives.

The other 'others' that emerge must be viewed as subjects with their own desire for self-identity (othering relations) and this further complicates the primary Other's (linearity discourse) desire for homogenous identity. This means that images in the novel must be viewed as subjective because they locate and position themselves according to changing context (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). The movement of signification where the Other (oral narrative images) exposes 'an Other' which also projects its desire for identity on new 'other's' makes it impossible for oral narratives to claim identity over images in the novel. This movement of signification is illustrated in *The Old Drift* by the dam which is built by Europeans on the Zambezi River and symbolises different things for different characters and readers. It is a symbol of development and modernisation because it will provide hydroelectric power according to the European characters in *The Old Drift*. On the contrary, the dam symbolises a disruption of Tonga traditional life when the local people are forced to leave their home in the valley to pave way for the building of the dam. The dispersal of meaning related to the dam demonstrated here is reminiscent of Plato's (1975, p. 5) questions over other 'other's' and their self-identity characterised by one (other 'other') and its relationship to many new 'others' at the same time. He muses that "it is questionable whether it [any object] has to be posited as scattered abroad and become many or, as itself while whole separated from itself, which seems absolutely impossible, becoming the identical one at once in a one and a plurality." The questions above are pertinent to our understanding that the essence or 'others' that emerge in the novel –whether we must identify an image such as the dam in *The Old Drift* as a sole representation of an oral narrative image (itself) or consider the many representations or other 'others' that emerge (one and many at the same time). For instance, if one took the presence of the dam in *The Old Drift* as a form of writing back to the west on which the orality discourse is anchored (as a preferred Other) they would have to specifically examine the response of the local people to the building of the dam (subject). This is because, the reaction and refusal of the Tonga in *The Old Drift* to leave the valley and pave way for building the dam may be viewed as a subversion or writing back to the European characters' view of the dam as a symbol of development and modernisation (through hydro-electricity) of *The Old Drift*. This view is informed by the Tonga's resistance to the translocation meant to give way for the damming of the Zambezi River and their insistence that

they would rather be swallowed by the dam waters together with their ancestors in the valley. In this case, the building of the dam and the people's separation from the land is a literal and metaphorical death of Indigenous traditions and proximity to the river god Nyami (Serpel, 2019). The adoption of the 'writing back' discourse at the expense of the idea of modernisation and development portrayed by the Europeans in *The Old Drift* demonstrates how a preferred primary Other is simply a choice among the many idioms and othering relations that the dam (subject) is capable of. Hence, the fact that images in the novel such as the dam are capable of different relations and enunciation of other 'others' means oral narrative influence can only be one among the many possible othering relations in the novel.

In addition, images such as the dam in *The Old Drift* may be subjected to its own othering actions (interaction with other objects –one and many things at the same time) outside its association with a particular Other. This means that in a case where the image of the dam is taken as preferred Other or signifier of writing back as illustrated earlier, the dam (as preferred Other) may create new othering relations (identification through 'other' others). This complicates the desire for a fixed and homogenous preferred Other such as oral narrative images because the image diverts from the path and demand of the linearity discourse. This is exemplified when the dam is considered from an ecocritical perspective, which diverts from both oral narrative linearity and the dichotomy between indigenous and western culture. An ecocritical perspective would consider the building of the dam as human beings' interference with nature's design by damming the Zambezi River and displacing both people and animals from their habitat. Furthermore, this new ecocritical 'other' births new 'others' such as the threat of unharnessed technology on nature. This is evidenced when the three members from the third generation of the three families in the novel (Naila, Jacob and Joseph) plan to sabotage beads (implants that almost every Zambian has in the hand used for all kinds of communication, internet and trade transactions). Their plan is to intercept transmission and power the beads with solar energy long enough to communicate (uninterrupted by the state) and stir a revolution among citizens in the country. The transmitters and later Joseph's drones placed on the dam wall to block the power grid (and the beads) put pressure on the weak wall and it collapses leading to an apocalyptic flood. This and the unexpected rain (as a result of global warming) demonstrates the danger of unharnessed technology that can cause destruction of Frankenstein magnitude (Guerin, et al., 2005). As a result, one observes three levels of othering

taking place here – the 'other' (human destruction of nature) of the discourse on writing back (primary other), which births another (in which the danger of unharnessed technology on nature is addressed). This demonstrates that the subject's (discourse of writing back using oral narratives) fixed identity on the primary other (dam) is nullified on the premise that the dam also identifies with a second other (human destruction of nature) dependent on the perspective of the analyses. Yet, this second 'other' further identifies with another (technology) which has nothing to do with the initial subject (discourse on writing back). The fact that we identify three possible interpretations related to the dam in *The Old Drift* where one is at liberty to choose any of them means analysis of images in the novel must be subjective and not pre-inscribed on a fixed 'identity'. Notwithstanding the power of subjectivity, one may take up a position (self-understanding) for instance of the dam as a form of writing back to the west, in full cognisance of the presence of other possible interpretations of the same image. This would take care of the emergence of not only the 'other' (danger of human beings on nature) but its 'other' (danger of unharnessed technology) as well, which has no direct relationship to the initial Other – oral narrative identity in the case of the linearity discourse.

Hence, in line with Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) suggestion of other 'idioms' of analysis, I propose that the images in the novel must be viewed as having divided essence rather than being related to fixed oral narrative identity. This is because it is not possible to exhaust everything there is to say about images in the novel (Garson, 2004). The impossibility related to knowing everything about ones family in *The Old Drift* where the narrative covers three families in a space of three generations confirms this. In other words:

> we should always posit a single form in respect to every one and search for it-we shall find one there-and if we are successful, then after the one we should look for two, if there are two, or otherwise for three or whatever the number is; each of these ones should be treated in the same way, until one can see of the original one not only that it is one, a plurality, and an indefinite number. (Plato, 1975, p. 5)

This means that if we desire to identify a homogenous form it cannot be narrowed to one object, as is the case with the assumed relationship of oral narratives to images in the novel. In addition, it is not possible to tie these essences to form definite identity because one can never say all there is to say about the subject. Naila, a third generation young female character who is part of one of

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the families in *The Old Drift* has always known her grandfather as colonel Giuseppe Corsale who worked as an engineer during the construction of the dam on the Zambezi river. Instead, we must consider that our search will reveal not one but indefinite essences of a purported original. This is until her grandmother Sibilla lets it slip that perhaps that is not all there is to the old man's identity when Naila asks about how the blueprints for the dam ended up in her grandfather's hands. Naila is curious about her grandmother's answer: "'Fredrico', Nonna Sibilla sang softly at her lap. 'Fredrico'. Who was Fredrico? Naila's grandfather's name was Giuseppo Corsale – the name printed at the top of each page she held in her hand" (Serpel, 2019, p. 529). Unbeknownst to Naila, her grandfather, the colonel, is Fredrico the man who murdered his brother colonel Giuseppo Corsale for raping Sibilla. He then adopted his brother's identity, went with Sibilla to Africa and got appointed as an engineer at the dam construction. The fact that Naila's grandfather is both Fredrico and Giuseppo demonstrates the divisibility of identity as Sibilla acknowledges when getting married to Fredrico-Giuseppo: "standing there in that half built church, Sibilla gazed through her double veil at her double man: Fredrico. With the false name, gait and moustache of his brother" (Serpel, 2019, p. 69). Therefore, while the oral narrative image may be considered a preferred identity, one must realise that it is not a homogenous identity but divided into many different versions which are all different but related to it at the same time. This means that one cannot exhaust all there is to know about anything including the dam blueprints and Naila's grandfather by extension. This view is inadvertently espoused in Naila's attitude towards her grandmother's confusion over Fredrico's name. Naila does not seem bothered to find out from her grandmother why Fredrico is mentioned and resolves that it does not matter by whose hands the blueprints landed in her grandfather's care. The fact that one can never fully exhaust and know the identity of images and characters such as Fredrico-Giuseppo in *The Old Drift* means that the identity of images in some novels is not definite. Consequently, oral narrative images can only be one but not the only entity that can be identified with images in the novel.

In this case, oral narrative images must be viewed as a beginning, which is a point of departure – but neither an origin nor end of a journey. This is contrasted with an 'origin' that is assumed to be an absolute logocentric source of identity in the oral narrative images from which images in the novel stem. However, origins of this nature are challenged by the view that identity is never a pre-given but one that is continuously challenged in novels such as *The Old Drift* where we specifically

observe how fixation on origins are challenged by the nature of the chorus, which simply appears with no clear origin. To this effect, Said (1985) distinguishes beginnings and origins with his view that beginnings unlike origins are not restricted to a point of origin or source, which means a beginning can follow another beginning and in the process encouraging non-linear development. The flexibility with chronology related to beginnings challenges logocentric assumptions of origins and by extension the idea of oral narratives as a point of origin for Zambian novels (images) in English. This is pertinent to the above noted thoughts about the divisibility of identity in essences and my argument that beginnings are non-linear – that is you can have a beginning within beginning without being concerned about the first beginning (ur-origin). For instance, the chorus in *The Old Drift* is described as a 'hovering' buzzing multitude and remains suspended 'nowhere' throughout the whole novel. This includes the fact that beginnings have influence on what comes after them (Said, 1985), rather than being trapped in a slavish imitation of some origin in the past. Further textual evidence is reflected in the chorus' warning about the danger of fixing origins because beginnings are always filled with more beginnings:

> You go hunting for a source, some ur-word or symbol and suddenly the path splits, cleaved by apostrophe or dash… into chaos of capillarity. Where you sought an origin, you find a vast babble, which is also a silence: a chasm of smoke, thundering. Blind mouth! (Serpel, 2019, p. 2)

 The lack of knowledge about where the chorus originated and their related warning that the search for ur-origins only reveals a maze of beginnings without a clear starting point means that origins are dangerous to our definite identification of images in the novel.

This further applies to the insistence that the placement of the chorus as an intermittent commentator in *The Old Drift* is reminiscent of the integration of songs in indigenous oral narratives such as inshimi[6] among the Bemba of Northern Zambia for similar purposes as the chorus. Interestingly, an analogue can be made with the use of the chorus in Greek mythology where the chorus appeared between scenes of the play to comment on previous and upcoming action. One firstly recognises how the presence of the Chorus in both Zambian indigenous narratives and Greek mythology means that orality is not a specifically Zambian aspect (Vansina, 1985; Ong, 2002; Mwangi, 2009) that would justify the claim of original Zambian literary identity. The fact that both may claim heritage of the chorus without clarity on which oral art (indigenous Zambian or Greek mythology) existed first indicates the complexity related to designating origins.

Hence, the complexity with identity that we observe here in the earlier view that ur- is not an origin but a maze of beginnings and the Lacanian (1992) idea that identity is inherently irreducible, means images such as the chorus should not be designated definite identity from oral narratives.

Furthermore, there can never be a pristine identity (origin) to follow from because the 'beginning' is always an infiltrated 'origin'. The reality that the origin is a ur- characterised by an uncertain maze suggests that it is infiltrated by otherness (standing in for the void) and cannot refer to absolute identity or oral narrative absolute signified. We observe how Serpel (2019) deconstructs the purity related to myths of nations and people, which Mwangi (2009, p. 123) observes are "told and retold in continuous and primordial myths that would be sacrilegious to challenge because they ostensibly present the divine view of the origins of the nation". This is akin to Derrida's (1974) comments on Saussure's (1959) view that writing violently usurps speech. Derrida (1974, p. 43) argues that "the violence by which writing would substitute itself for its own origin, [speech]…cannot be an accidental aberration. Usurpation necessarily refers us to a profound possibility of essence. This is without a doubt inscribed within speech itself." This means that writing is mistakenly assumed to subvert speech when in actual fact writing has already existed in speech as that which fills an irreducible lack in speech –a supplement as I argue in Chapter 3 on differ̀ance. This observation breaches the orality-writing binary in which images in the novel originate solely from oral narrative images. *The Old Drift* mythicises the story of David Livingstone and relates it to the origin of Zambia as a nation. The chorus narrates at the beginning of the novel that: "This is a story of a nation –not a nation or a people –so it begins of course with a white man" (Serpel, 2019, p. 1). The chorus explain further how David Livingstone accidently stumbled upon the Victoria Falls while looking for the source of the Nile. In addition, he eventually dies of malaria but European invasion from which the nation (Old Drift and Northern Rhodesia) grows is justified as a fulfilment of David Livingstone's legacy. Later in the novel Ronald tells his white wife the history of Zambia and another myth of the nation's origin gets exposed:

> Ronald skipped the real story: the southern migration of the Bemba tribe from the north in the seventeenth century, the battles with the other tribes and the bargains with Arab slave traders that had left a struggling group of warriors wondering the great plateau… until one day…they came upon a sapphire lake, shiwa, with a dead crocodile, n'gandu on its shores –a sign that they should settle there. (Serpel, 2019, p. 98)

In the light of this second myth, it may be noted that we are presented with two competing myths of origin yet the fact that the black porters from the Livingstonian myth already occupied the land before David Livingstone arrived, lends authenticity to Ronald's myth. Yet, Ronald's myth of origin may be challenged on account that the black people in his myth came from the North and had mixed with Arabs by the time David Livingstone arrived. Hence, both myths contest the unchallengeable authenticity often associated with legends as a reflection of people's origin. In addition, the myths in the novel demonstrate that origins are often infiltrated from the beginning as shown by the fact that, neither David Livingstone nor the black people he found in Zambia were the original subjects of the land. This means that origins, such as oral narrative images, cannot be considered pure sources from which images in the novel originate.

Therefore, eclectic identification (as opposed to identity) of images in the novel must be considered from the perspective of role-playing. This means considering the 'other' roles or purposes that oral narrative images in the novel may serve other than writing back to the West for instance. The position, in *The Old Drift*, of female characters, such as Matha, in society is a point of reference. One might miss the image of this woman that does not fit neatly into the category of the common oral narrative image of a woman as subservient, while they are fixated on the image that writes back to the west and reclaims its precolonial pristine image. On the contrary, contemporary novelists have moved past the first phase or nationalist post-colonial tendencies (Dimitriu, 2006) and are writing more about what presently concerns them. According to Musila (2008), this includes not writing back to the West but writing back and subverting those images in African indigenous oral narratives that are oppressive. As Mwangi (2009, p. 1) further observes:

> The novels further depart from the tradition of "writing back" to the European colonial centre by focusing their gaze on local forms of expression that are seen to parallel classical colonialism…examined here are contemporary African novels that demonstrate perceptual shifts in focus from issues of external colonialism to a more self-reflexive treatment of gender and sexual relations.

The implication of the above quote is that, while the basis of the discourse of linearity and identification with oral narrative images is a nostalgic desire for a pristine identity that was good, not everything could have been good. We therefore observe a shift in *The Old Drift*'s portrayal of women like Matha and her mother Bernadetta who are not subservient but partakers in the world

or space reserved for men. It is narrated that Bernadetta, and not her husband Mr Mwamba, is actively involved in the freedom struggle to the extent that she gets imprisoned while trying to save Ba Nkoloso and dies in prison. Bernadetta further takes the head of the family position as a decision maker when she shaves Mathas's head in order to enable her to attend school reserved for boys against her husband and society's wishes. The subversion of the image of a woman is further emphasised by the fact that Ba Nkoloso disguises himself as a woman in order to elude the police. This symbolises the usurpation of power by the female characters in the novel as also noted in the elevation of the image of a woman to power reflected in Bernadetta's political ambitions and decision making position in the family (when she decides to send Matha to school). This image is contrary to the subservient woman or the portrayal of women in many oral narratives as a bride prize someone gets for bravery and military prowess (Sumaili, 1982). The differences in the portray of women that is based on the role a woman is playing in a particular narrative (or text) means the image of a woman must not be restricted to a particular role and identity.

Matha, who inherits her mother's (Bernadetta) political ambitions in *The Old Drift*, demonstrates that women in some novels subvert the usual archetypes associated with women, thus further validating the view of role-taking. This challenges the fixation on particular archetypes and identity, such as oral narrative ancestry, which cannot account for images that divert from the norm. Matha becomes the only woman actively involved in Ba Nkoloso's Guerrilla cadet movement and as a departure from the common literary archetype of a woman as evil and a seductress; Matha's downfall comes at the hands of her male colleague Godfrey. He impregnates her, leaves her, and thus brings her life and dreams to a standstill. Instead, in Medusa-like style and in a reversal of the view of a woman as 'femme fatale' (Guerin, et al., 2005), it is Godfrey who always seduces Matha with his murderous eyes. We are informed that although Matha's sister describes him as "sleepy dude" (Serpel, 2019, p. 175) and his eyes as "vegetable-dull eyes" (p. 176) for Matha, his eyes always "twinkled at her" (p. 172). The portrayal of Martha and Bernadetta as powerful and assertive may be considered a form of writing back to a patriarchal society (portrayed in oral narratives as well) that portrays women as weak and seductresses. This is similar to Doherty's (2014) observation on modern novelists such as Chimamanda Adichie that may be considered to be writing back to earlier African novels such as Chinua Achebe's (1958) *Things Fall Apart* where women are portrayed as subservient and appendages of men. Hence, it is not a

coincident that the female protagonist in Adichie's (2009) *The Headstrong Historian* is a descendant of Obierika from Umuofia village (Doherty, 2014). Finally, the juxtaposition of the role of women in Zambian indigenous traditional society and oral narratives invites a consideration of the identity of images in the novel as not restricted to writing back to the West or bringing out what was good about our pre-colonial culture. On the contrary, oral narrative images are sometimes used for different roles, such as self-reflexively commenting about society, and in the depiction of women in indigenous oral narratives and society.

6.3.2 Impossible 'I' and images in *The Old Drift*

I use the impossibility related to fully articulating the subject 'I' in *The Old Drift* to argue that the produced ambiguous images (subjects) cannot be identified with absolute identity or oral narrative images. That is, if one equates images in the novel to a linguistic subject 'I', which rarely articulates itself as an explicit subject in every instance where it appears in the novel. This is reminiscent of Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) view that fixation on the term 'identity' is flawed because of its insistence that people can only be qualified to particular identity if they have an explicit combination of commonality, connectedness and groupness. The scholars (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) suggest that such rigid and bound categories are impossible because sometimes what binds people together maybe two or even none of the three categories. Similarly, I note that the narrator in *The Old Drift* cannot be subjected to any fixed form, such as the oral narrative communal narrator, because the 'identity' of both narrator and subject of narration is not always decipherable in the narration. The 'I' is always a split between the subject of the statement and the subject of enunciation. This is akin to the way that the ego (subject of enunciation) becomes the introjected version of the subject's alienated image (subject of the statement) –a spokesperson (Chiesa, 2007). We observe this with the chorus in *The Old Drift* that may be considered the subject of enunciation (I) –the narrator that speaks on behalf of the other characters doubling as the narrator that knows only as much as the characters and the omniscient commentator of events (Genette, 1980). The spokesperson position complicates the identity (I) of the characters and makes it unreliable because they are prevented from speaking except by being spoken for. For instance, although we are informed that the chorus is a buzzing multitude, it poses a question in the end that unsettles it's (their) identity: "are we really a we? Or just a swarm in the swarm? Worse is this me?!" (Serpel, 2019, p. 562). Therefore, the chorus is not certain about who they are or how many they are and in that way questions the reliability of the self (I) as an absolute

single form. The identity of the 'I' is further complicated by the fact that in many cases it is not clear whether the subject of the enunciation is one or many voices speaking.

In addition, another complication with identifying the subject of the statement arises from the fact that a statement or narration may include situations where the subject (I) has to be deciphered from a description. In other words, as Bal (2019, p.21) suggests "as soon as there are images that represent figures doing things, there is a form of narration going on." This is what we observe in the section of the novel dealing with Silvia's story. Matha enters a deep depression where she cries all the time and never talks to Silvia after her disappointment with Silvia's father (Godfrey) (Serpel, 2019). As a result, the narration of the communication between mother and child involves a description of non-verbal actions and not reported speech. The failure of the self 'I' to manifest itself by concealment behind a spokesperson or the fact that we do not know who is really speaking (as spokesperson and who they are speaking to and for) in the absence of actual speech means the 'I'(self) cannot be relied upon to exhibit definite identity. This also applies to the images from oral narratives, such as the communal narrator in the novel, which would not be considered to offer absolute identity in the novel as witnessed by uncertainty related to the chorus' self-identity (I).

The realisation that images in the novel cannot be reduced to or identified with oral narrative images would mean settling for an impossible 'I' (subject or image in the novel) –a desire of the other's desire. That is, if one insists on identifying images in the novel with oral narrative images, they would have to keep on projecting that desire outward onto many 'other' objects in an attempt to fill up the irreducible and impossible desire of oral narrative identity (to identify with images in the novel). This is because the nature of identity is such that oral narrative images have equally never had a definite identity. As a result, the desire by images in the novel to satisfy that desire (satisfy the inherent lack of identity in oral narratives) becomes a desire for the same thing, which is to satisfy the lack or impossibility of identity. This is clear in the relationship between Silvia and Lee in *The Old Drift* where her desire to fulfil Lee's desire for an HIV vaccine proves futile when Lee dies reducing the fulfilment of the desire to impossibility.

Furthermore, the lack of identity can never be filled because of the very nature of identity, which is characterised by uncertainty and means the desire for the other's desire is equal to an empty set (Fink, 2003) or nothing. This means that the child (images in the novel) is a product of the mother's desire (oral narrative desire for longevity and identification) to fulfil the irreducible lack that she

also has. Therefore, the child's desire as soon as he realises that he cannot satisfy his mother (and her irreducible lack of identity) is a desire and search for what she desires –that object that if found will satisfy him because he (it) has satisfied the mother. Lee, in a similar way to the mother in Lacan's (1992) theory needs (desires) Silvia as a subject for his research directed at creating an HIV/AIDS vaccine. Silvia misunderstands his desire (like the child who originally thinks he is the object of the mother's desire) when they become involved in a sexual affair. She later realises that the affair is not the object of his desire (with her) when he divorces his wife and marries a different woman instead of her. The realisation that she is a means to his desire –the vaccine, makes her now offer herself as a guinea pig that he travels around the world with in order to create the vaccine. Silvia's desire to satisfy Lee by providing his desire –the vaccine fails when Lee dies from the virus before he can complete the research. The fact that both desires remain irreducible because of Lee's death demonstrates the impossibility of articulation related to the futile pursuit for both the subject's qua the other's desire because it is equivalent to nothing and is formless because it is incapable of taking absolute form. Therefore, this is similar to the oral narrative discourse desire for images in the novel to desire oral narrative images in order to provide a definite identity for the Zambian novel in English. Yet, the oral narrative desire to identify with images in the novel represents an impossible subject (I) in like manner to Silvia's first misplacement of her desire and eventual failure to fulfil Lee's desired vaccine. This is because, the novel's desire (identification of its images) is, in a similar way to Silvia's realisation about Lee's true desire, something that must be considered impossible because oral narratives and the term 'identity' cannot fully account for it.

6.4 Conclusion

I have argued that we cannot fixedly identify images in the Zambian novel in English with oral narrative mnemonic images because such fixity and the term 'identity' cannot fully encompass analysis of the images. This challenges the decolonial desire for a predetermined, pristine indigenous oral culture (identity) (Chinweizu, et al., 1985; Onwumere & Egbulonu, 2014) and by extension oral narrative images to which one can return in order to claim authentic African or Zambian identity. I argue that such a pristine identity is impossible because firstly, the subject (identity) is inherently characterised by an irreducible helplessness (Chiesa, 2007) and secondly the term 'identity' is always an insufficient category of analysis (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). For

this reason, the creation of identity always involves the outward projection and alienation from the subject onto other objects. This leads to a situation where the subject only attains identity by excluding other objects in an effort to narcissistically centre its own desire and preferred object of identity while pushing other objects in the periphery. The realisation that identity is irreducible leads to successive projections by the subject onto other objects without arriving at a definite identity. I therefore utilised images in Kalimamukwento's (2019) *The Mourning Bird* to demonstrate how the impossibility of definite identity results in the creation of margins within margins and polarised or binary relations of centre and periphery in which the centre (subject) designates itself as the 'all seeing eye' (Bhabha, 2004). In reality, the centre is blind or shortsighted while inadvertently suppressing and silencing all the 'other' signifiers of identity that may be present.

In addition, I employed the idea of names to illustrate that identity can never be fixed to definite identity or character of an object but must instead be viewed as fragmented where the selection of a preferred image considers the other objects present. The images in Serpel's *The Old Drift* also indicate the need to stir away from fixation on a particular 'other' or the term identity as a category of analysis by suggesting the use of other 'others' (idioms). This is because categories of analysis such as oral narrative fixation on a novel's image ('other') is not dependable because this 'other' may evoke other 'others', which have independent identifying relationships. As a result, images in the novel must be viewed from the perspective of an active process of identification where analysis takes a position but considers the other perspectives available. As such, I suggested that images in the novel must be viewed as divided essences with 'beginnings' and not origins because origins are always infiltrated. Furthermore, this means that images must be viewed according to the various roles that they may play in a particular novel. This is because the identity (subject) as self ('I') is always impossible since it consists of the subject's desire for the 'other's' desire. Identity presupposes a set of explicit characteristics that qualify images for a particular identity and yet in many cases articulation of images such as the subject 'I' is not always clear. Hence, images in the novel cannot be designated to absolute identity of any definite subject such as oral narratives.

I have argued that images in the novel can never refer to a definite identity such as oral narratives because the identity of the subject never matches perfectly with the object. This creates margins

within margins when the centre (in this case discourse on oral narrative linearity) that designates itself the spokesperson for the novel, pre-determines oral narrative identity on the novel's images and excludes or pushes the other images that do not fit into the prescribed identity to the periphery. I discussed the manner in which NGOs speak for, commodify and designate identity to street kids in *The Mourning Bird*. The intention was to demonstrate how the centre (NGOs) marginalise the children while purporting to speak on their behalf. This is because the NGOs as centre and custodian of power and knowledge authorise themselves to speak on behalf of the children. In reality their self-appointment as the 'all seeing eye' makes them blind to the children's actual identity, which they supress and do not lend a voice. I therefore suggest that there is need to engage with the object (street kids and by extension images in the novel) to find out the children's perspective because the centre's fixation of identity on the margin or 'other' is not always passively received. Instead, as we observed in Chimuka's wilful silent resistance and her internalised speech that, the margins, subaltern or periphery speak in the silence but simply need audience. In this way, we may address the misrecognition that results from fixation on identity, which in a similar way to names in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) do not always match with the subject. Therefore, instead of fixation on a particular object of identity, such as oral narratives, I suggested that those images in the novel that do not fit neatly into this category be accorded enunciation any way. This is because identity, which is always inherently impossible (Lacan, 1992), will now be considered as a fragmented, ever-changing space and not a fixed definite and unified entity imagined by the discourse on oral linearity.

Finally, I envisioned a portrayal of images in the novel that considers the other 'others' or idioms that may arise in the novel at any time challenging the view of a fixed identity related to oral narrative images. This is because fixation on a specific 'other' for identity presupposes a pristine origin of identity and an absolute self as identity. I used images such as the dam built on the Zambezi River in *The Old Drift* to demonstrate how the image would be considered a reversal of the role of the dam as a symbol of the European notion of development. That is, one would now consider the dam a symbol of devastation to African life and tradition including oral narrative tradition illustrated by the Tonga's initial refusal to be displaced from their ancestral land and pave way for the dam. Yet, other 'others' are evoked because the dam also symbolises the ecocritical destruction of nature by human beings and further the 'other' danger of unharnessed technology

on nature. For this reason and because it is not clear where the chorus in the novel (and as a mnemonic technique) came from, images in the novel and their identity must be viewed as having 'beginnings' but never origins because in a similar way to the infiltrated myth of the origin of the Old Drift, origins are always infiltrated. The point then is that the identity of images must be viewed as a divided essence where genres and styles are intertwined, as is the case with *The Old Drift* where fairy tale, science fiction, romance and history are merged in one narrative. This is specifically the case in the way the liberation struggle blends historical facts and the astronaut cover (science fiction) to depict Ba Nkoloso's version of the Cha Cha Cha rebellion. Further, images in the novel must be considered as playing different roles other than writing back or recapturing pristine identity of indigenous oral narratives. This is evident in my observation that the portrayal of women as assertive and taking leading roles, as noted in Matha and her mother Bernadetta's significant role in the struggle for independence, may be considered as commentary on a patriarchal society. In this way, the image is used to write back to patriarchal tendencies envisioned in indigenous oral narratives and not a response (writing back) to western oppression. Therefore, fixed identity may be considered impossible in a similar way to the self's (I) failure to manifest itself as an absolute subject in the chorus' narration of *The Old Drift*. The term identity fails to fulfil its analytical role because there is neither an explicit subject nor characteristics to encompass and account for the ambiguously articulated 'I'. Ultimately, the identity of images cannot be considered absolute because the desire for identity of images in the novel would be a desire for the preferred 'Other's' (oral narrative identity) identity. Yet, capturing this identity would be impossible because the term identity (for both oral narratives and images in the novel), is inherently formless and helpless.

Hence, the general argument of this chapter was that oral narrative mnemonic devices cannot be sole representative or custodians of identity for images in the novel because the term 'identity' is by virtue of pre-inscription problematic. This is because it presupposes a situation where images in the novel are trapped into a fixed reference to a fixed category or oral narrative logocentric signified as 'identity'. I argued that this bound category collapses on itself when it cannot account for the other images in novels, such as Kalimamukwento's *The Mourning Bird* (2019) and Serpel's *The Old Drift* (2019), which may not fit into particular prescribed boundaries. I used images in *The Mourning Bird* to demonstrate how insistence on a logoncentric oral narrative signified or any

other signified creates margins within margins through the 'centre' that have designated themselves spokesperson (oral narrative discourse) for the novel's images. Centre/ periphery boundaries are evoked when the centre embraces images that answer to prescribed categories, such as oral narrative influence, and exclude or marginalise those that do not fit into the created boundaries. This is the case where the street kids in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) are inadvertently othered by the NGOs that are supposed to be speaking on their behalf. I argued that those images in the margin that do not fit into the dominant discourse are reduced to silence, since the centre's discourse becomes the authorised voice of both the centre and the periphery. Hence, my suggestion is that the silences are engaged because they represent perspectives that may not be included when the gaze or focus (related to novels' images) is on the signified such as oral narrative signified at the centre. Similarly, I used Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) suggestion to consider other idioms that illuminate the fact that identity cannot account for the other others or idioms that emerge in the novel while attention is on oral narrative ascendency as a preferred Other. I further argued that images must be considered as divided essence, which have beginnings but no origin or logocentre because in like manner to the split myths in *The Old Drift* (Serpel, 2019), the origin is always infiltrated. Rather, images should be taken for subjective roles being played in particular novels. In fact, identity must be viewed as an empty set where a desire for an absolute entity identity leads to a chain of differànce and deferral (Derrida, 1978) but without revelation of a tangible signified. This is because identity is an irreducible entity that is incapable of encompassing everything it purports to identify. For this reason, images in the novel cannot be relied on to offer a tangible logocentre, which is pre-inscribed. This is because, the assumed logocentre (oral narrative signified) is not located where it is supposed to be because its existence depends on another identity or signified it is purported to refer to.

Endnotes

[1] This is based on Said's (1978) idea of orientalism, which refers to how the West created an imaginary 'other' or orient by inscribing stereotypical identity of a backward, incapacitated, savage race that justified empiricist and colonial invasion of other countries.

[2] Outward projection of desire (for identity) in Lacan's imaginary stage results in a human child fixing its attention on one out of the many 'other' objects it comes into contact with (the gaze). The child then internalises this as an ego, which is defined as the primary source of the subject's alienated status. The child introjects the ego as its identity but soon realises that the ego cannot provide identity due to the irreducible nature of identity. After this, the subject (ego) projects itself on various objects as 'ideal ego' till an 'ego ideal' is introjected and this shapes all projections of the ego that follow. This continues until a child enters the symbolic stage where a subject identifies himself or herself with the symbolic Other (denoted with the capital letter 'O' because it is superior to the small 'others' in the imaginary stage) as the ultimate and only identity.

[3] This is envisioned in Spivak's (1988) essay on the way holders of socioeconomic and political power speak for the marginalised and silence them to the extent of giving them no chance to describe their lives or how the power structure affects them. The term 'subaltern' was used by Gramsci to refer to groups of people excluded from formal socio-political structure by those that control it from the centre.

[4] Said's (1978) idea of reading the colonised or marginalised by engaging them or reading from their perspective.

[5] An African Astronaut.

[6] Ng'andu (2009) defines *inshim*i as a Bemba (an ethnic group from the Northern part of Zambia) oral narrative form with intermittent songs for commentary. He further distinguishes them from *utushimi* –oral narratives without songs.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This study argued that images in the Zambian Novel in English cannot be considered pure representations of linearity from oral narratives because novels are characterised by more complex interactions that cannot fit into a fixed and pre-inscribed identity. This implies that the analysis of the novel needs to consider the multicultural, changeable, unpredictable and varying temporal contexts represented in different novels and their images. I made these observations while recognising that oral narrative mnemonic devices play a role in framing the Zambian novel in English with regards to caricature, repetitions, communal narrator and so on as illustrated by some of the studies (Mbwayu, 1987; Sackey, 2010; Krishnan, 2014; Chilala, 2016) I reviewed in Chapter One. Yet, my study established that although the presence of such images and mnemonic methods in novels is often associated with oral narratives memorability, the images themselves are more complex. My views challenge the relationship of linearity and absolute referential association espouced by the common decolonialist view (related to national cultural autonomy) that the presence of oral narrative mnemonic images seeks to create collective memories and evoke a prestine pre-colonial voice lost during colonialism (Chinweizu, et al., 1985; Ashcroft, 2004; Onwumere & Egbulonu, 2014; Chilala, 2016). My argument is based on observations by scholars such as Musila (2008) and Wessels (2006) that create the impression that images are not frozen absolute entities passed on from oral narratives to the novel. In addition, the studies suggest that images in the novel are not homogenous entities that refer to an equally homogenous fixed orignal image in oral narratives. This is in reference to Derrida's (1974) rejection of logocentrism and the specific binary and polarised distinction that presupposes an original centre of truth to which all things subscribe. My thesis is further achored in the related binary and polarised view in which a hierachised dichotomy is created after one pair, in this case orality (oral narratives in this case), is considered more logocentric than writing (and the novel). For these reasons, images in the novel cannot be assumed to be frozen entities referring soley to oral narrative equivalents.

I discussed five parameters by which I challenged the idea or linearity and logocentricity of indigenous Zambian oral narratives in the binary (signifier/signified) pair where oral narratives are considered the logocentric centre and absolute signified of images in the novel. Firstly, I argued that the hierachised signifier/signified binary between oral narratives and images in the novel is challenged by heteroglossic and carnivalesque images in novels such as *Day of the Baboons* (Saidi,

1991) and *Patchwork* (Banda-Aako, 2011). Secondly, I examined the idea that a signified or logocentre that always lies outside the sign (image in the novel), as is the case with the idea that images in the novel (signifier) signify oral narrative (signified), is problematic. This is because such a signified must be considered absent in the sign and the novel except as compensated for by differànce as illustrated by images in *Changing Shadows* (Musenge, 2014) and *The Chosen Bud*. Thirdly, inherent unstable time and space relations (chronotopes) related to images in the novel imply flexible non-static interaction among and within images. This complicates the assumption that the images in *Tongue of the Dumb* and *Quills of Desire* that I examine are static or frozen oral narrative equivalents. Fourthly, I established that the unstable back and forth in-betweeness of images in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) and *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) breaks signifier/signified binaries. In addition, It was noted that the difference between pedagogy and practice demonstrated in both novels challenges referential power that the signified has over the signifier. This is because signification is now located beyond the confines of signifier and signified binaries. This frees images in the novel from confinement in signifier/signified dichotomy of signification including oral narrative reference. Notwithstanding the previous observations, I argued that none of the alternatives raised in the four points above must be taken as as a fixed alternative for oral narrative ancestry. Instead, in Chapter Six I argued that fixating on any single analytical approach to images in the Zambian novel in English would be as problematic as fixation on a pre-inscribed entity such as 'identity'or oral narratives. I analysed the images depicted in *The Mourning Bird* (Kalimamukwento, 2019) and *The Old Drift* (Serpel, 2019) to establish that fixation on a pre-inscribed entity such as 'identity' and oral narratives leads to othering, perpetuation of centre/perphery binaries and a silencing of the margins. The study concluded that there is need to address the margins, or other 'others' because affiliation to a fixed term such as 'identity'or oral narrative signified cannot account for all the other places and infinite other idioms (other 'others') that may emerge in the novel.

I argued that oral narrative mnemonic devices in the novel cannot signal absolute linearity and reference to oral narratives because images in the novel are characterised by multicultural heteroglossic and carnivalesque images. An analysis of *Day of the Baboons* (Saidi, 1991) and *Patchwork* (Banda-Aako, 2011) revealed images that are multicultural because they bring different ethnicities and cultures together in the novel. Furthermore, this combination results in many

cultural, social, religious and political voices speaking –heteroglossia. I observed, particularly in *Day of the Baboons*, how deceptive masks were used during pre - independence years by the three protagonists Shadrech, Mishech and Abednego in a way that spells multiculturalism. The deceptive masks inadvertently showed multiple cultures coming together in order to remain under the radar of colonial government. Thus, characters such as Misheck take up two personas –being a teacher at a colonial school and a local party member. This makes the images in the novel double-voiced allowing us a view of both public and private transcripts (Scott, 1990) that we would not see if our focus was on one culture such as oral narrative ancestry. Furthermore, in *Patchwork* I explored the motif of the patchwork to illuminate images as a bricolage/heteroglossia of neat patchworks. This is based on the motif Sissy Pumpkin's nanny uses to explain that if one tells a lie she can quickly mend it resulting in neat patchwork similar to a torn and sewed dress. I extended the neat patchwork motif to mutually inclussive images in *Patchwork*, which blend different identities and ethnicities in one image such as Pumpkin who has two birth certificates with two names from two different ethnic groups. I also observed how binary opposites, old tradition and modernity merge in modern geographies (Soja, 1989) such as Kudu court where the old is illustrated by Bee's mother the Nganga and uncle Oscar the pilot representing technology, yet they all live together in the modern apartments at Kudu court. Both the deceptive masks and neat patchworks in *Day of the Baboons* and *Patchwork* revealed that images in the novel may be multi-voiced and cannot be trusted to refer to any single absolute signified including oral narratives.

Furthermore, I drew on the notion of the carnivalesque (Bahktin, 1981) to explore how the heteroglossic and multicultural images mentioned above may become sites where humour and chaos disrupt the idea of authority or dominance of one culture or class or social group over others. This dismantles signifier/signified dichotomy in which one aspect, in this case oral narratives (of the binary pair), is privileged as more representational than the other (images in the novel). In *Day of The Baboons* I observed how public places such as the shebeen become spaces of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation (Deleuze, 1987) where characters can either get along like Misheck and the Shebeen queen or clash like Misheck and Mr Hughes. In cases where cultures clash, the carnivalesque becomes the medium through which characters subvert authority or dominance of one culture through parody, laughter and satire. This also disrupts binaries of absolute reference of pure signs to pure signified oral narrative mnemonic images. Such

carnivalesque subversion is observed in Misheck's argument with Mr Hughes, a character of coloured identity, where Misheck challenges Mr Hughes who thinks he is superior because of the colour of his skin. It is no longer clear who is in charge meaning the powers that Mr Hughes thinks he had over Misheck are suspended. The pretentious nature related to coloured superiority is further mocked by the coloured woman with a Eurpean tone who laughs about nothing. In addition, the author uses caricature to depict the coloureds in a way that mocks their self proclaimed importance. The fact that Misheck unseats the coloureds (and their assumed superiority) from power (signified) through the carnivalesque demonstrates how no single culture or signified, such as oral narrative, can lay absolute superiority over another image such as the novel's images.

I further utilised Sissy's view of a messy patchwork in *Patchwork* to illustrate how some images come into the novel in a dialogic fashion where different and dynamic interpretations, such as the interaction, rejection and formation of new relationships with others, would be taking place. This was observed when opposing speech types, such as the ones between Pumpkin (the protagonist and narrator of *Patchwork*) and Bee, come together. Pumpkin's superiority is demonstrated by her use of broken English when narrating Bee's speech. Yet, Bee challenges this authority by grotesque imagery, telling Pumpkin that the authority and superiority is broken by the fact that they both go to the toilet (Banda-Aako, 2011). These images of the lower stratum are according to Bahktin (1984) a symbol of subversion of power by lower classes who force us to recognise them. In a similar way, one considers that the non dominant intrepretation of images forces itself on us in the novel and must not be ignored, while our attention is fixed on oral narrative ancestry. The fact that in both the Shebeen's and Pumpkin's case the authority of the assumed dominant part of the binary pair is challenged breaks down the hierarchy of one over the other. By extension this also breaks the assumed absolute referrential power that the oral narrative signified is given over images in the novel. The danger in sticking to oral narrative signified or any other signified is that it perpetuates a single story (Adichie, 2009) and prevents an eclectic anlysis of images in the novel that considerd other cultures and aspects.

Furthermore, I suggested that images in the novel cannot be considered to refer to an oral narrative absolute signified because such a centre is always located outside the sign (signifier relating to a signified outside itself). I examined images in *Changing Shadows* (Musenge, 2014) and *The Chosen Bud* (Luangala, 1991) using Derrida's (1978; 2004) idea of differànce and how it accounts

and compensates for the sign's void of meaning by facilitating differànce –the idea that meaning of signs is always deferred and differed because of the absence of inherent meaning for the sign. This means the sign or image in the novel is always empty of the meaning of the signified, which is located outside but the signified (such as oral narrative image) is also empty of meaning because it is also inherently a sign that refers to a signified outside itself. Thus, in Chapter Three I used images depicted in *Changing Shadows* and *The Chosen Bud* to suggest that such a sign (images in the novel), which is inherently meaningless, cannot refer absolutely to another sign, in this case oral narrative mnemonics, if both of them are devoid of internal meaning. Plays of chains of signification, detours, substitutions, supplements and traces, and never tangible signifiers and signifieds occupy the space where meaning of the sign should be. The idea of differànce cancels the idea of a logocentric orign situated in oral narratives because such a centre of meaning or signified is located outside the sign. What we have is not a simulteneous presence of a signifier/ presence (in the novels images) and absence of a signified (oral narratives) but the sign cannot be articulated and what we have instead is a chain of non-centres.

I considered the above views on differànce in my exploration of the nature of differànce in *Changing Shadows*. Here, I established that images in the novel that are constantly evolving and exiled from time cannot be tangible enough to ground stable signifiers or signified. I argued that evolving signs or round characters and signs that are exiled from linear temporal time cannot be linear or absolute signifiers of oral narrative mnemonic images. To this end, round characters such as Kasongo and Mwila in *Changing Shadows*, get their meaning and memorability from a plurivocity, which comes from a combination of traces, detours and supplements as they evolve. This is unlike oral narrative mnemonic images, which get their mnemonic strengh from being archetypal and frozen. The round characters in the novel are different because of my view that they are empty of inherent meaning and cannot be grounded in any stable signification to anything stable or in normal linearity or chronology. That is why I argued that the linearity from oral narratives to the novel is disrupted by signs in *Changing Shadows* that do not stick to a linear movement or chronological movement of frozen images from oral narratives to the novel. This is specifically demonstrated in the differànce facilitated by silence related to delay in communication among the Bemba, the use of letters for communication, and the way time is exiled through postponement of communication, deferral and failure of immediate communication. This is

observed in Mwila's case where the Bemba custom of delaying communication till she has eaten and rested prevents the immediate revelation of her expulsion to her family (Musenge, 2014). The delay raises speculation among her relatives as to why she has come home. I suggested that those speculations represent proxies that come to stand in for the fact that the signified message of Mwila's expulsion is not articulated but deferred to the future. Yet, when the revelation of Mwila's expulsion is finally made, it shows non-diachronic tendencies because it raises other images such as the speculations by villagers, which means that it is a never ending cycle and not something linear. Hence, such images that keep evolving and cannot fit in linear time due to failure of immediate communication open up the play of signification indefinitely and cannot be grounded in any signified within or outside the novel such as oral narratives.

The discussion also established that signs that have deferred voice and are not identical when repeated or translated may institute differànce. To this effect, I explored differànce related to signs in *The Chosen Bud* that are the same but not identical. I argued specifically that when a sign is repeated in the novel, as is the case with the use of oral narrative images in the novel, the sign or image splits, is deferred, supplemented or has something added to it. Such an image cannot be identical to oral narrative images. That is, context or spatial relations add supplements that make it impossible for an image to stay the same from one context to another and this is observed in the change that is made to an English proverb that is appropriated to suit the village context in *The Chosen Bud.* Furthermore, the signified's referential power is challenged and obliterated by the dispersal or non-identical signifiers present in the novel for a specific signified. This is observed in the idea of family and its signifier peace, which in reality is challenged by Kalimbambo's murderous deed that breaks the peace. This makes the sign of family signify something different and introduces another signifier of family. I further established how the repeated image is devoid of meaning because the signified that is repeated, such as the story of Leira's death that forms the narrative in the novel (a subsequent narration), is outside of the text. The narrative takes place after Leira's death by characters such as Sicholo and Nanzama or Chinsamba that did not witness the actual death. The past brings its interpretation but the present also brings its own meaning and the sign gets supplemented meaning from the signs surrounding it as noted in the way Nanzama brings her perspective as a mother or Sicholo shows her concern on what has led to Leira's apperance to the living. Similarly, the absence of the original context of the songs whether a song is translated

into English or presented verbatim in the indigenous language or with commentaries, means they cannot be the orignal signified since they have been uprooted from their original context and cannot be intrepreted in the English context because the original context is absent. What ties the songs' meaning together are mediations and pseudo presences –differences among proxies and not any original signified of the songs. The deferal and loss of meaning due to change of context where an image now gets its meaning from different surrounding signs means images in some novels cannot refer to any signified, such as oral narratives, even if they are repeated or translated like the songs and proverbs in *The Chosen Bud*.

The study noted further that, images in the novel cannot be a linear continuation of oral narrative mnemonic images and devices because of unstable time and space (chronotopes) relations between images in novels such as Mulaisho's (2007) *Tongue of the Dumb* and Sinyangwe's (2010) *Quills of Desire*. The transfer of static images from one stage to another is challenged by the variability, changeability and mutability of inherent time and space relations. This abolishes the desire for linear continuation and transfer of cultural identity based on the creation of collective memories through the instigation of fixed images in both literary theory and practice. Pertinent to my argument is Bahktin's (1981) idea on chronotopes and his view that every artistic mental construction, and by extension images in the novel and oral narratives, is characterised by interelated time and space relations that challenge the stability of images. This is because the *Tongue of the Dumb* and *Quills of Desire* are characterised by flexible interaction among diverse time and space relations from different genres, actions and fictional worlds. This study broke down the building blocks of images (time and space relations) in the novel by exploring the creation of polysytems (Bemong, 2010) from different time and space relations in the Zambian Historical novel and the working of pure duration (Eve-Zohar, 2005) in an effort to investigate the effect of perception and experiences on the dynamism of images in the novel. I also examined the idea that images in the novel are made up of different or tripartite levels of chronotopic constructions and have diverse inter and intra chronotopic level interactions, which make it impossible for images to be frozen or static in *Quills of Desire*. The conclusion was that images in the novel are unstable because of varying and dynamic interactions as a result of pure duration, polysystems and inter/intra level relationships. Such unstable images cannot be relied on to refer to anything stable including oral narrative images.

In *Tongue of the Dumb* I firstly explored how polysystems are created by the combination of different chronotopes to create new ones that are not related to the individual ones. This means no single chronotope or image, such as oral narrative images, can claim sole ancestry over images in the novel. For instance, *Tongue of the Dumb* combines the fantastic or idyll often related to indigenous oral narratives with the Greek adventure everyday life and this prevents it from being a simple replication of oral narratives. The belief in charms and supernatural, such as the weather changes being a result of supernatural phenomenon or supernatural beliefs related to Mwape's dumbness and the floods that kill Dulani, exemplify the fantastic and iydyll of indigenous orality. Yet, these are mixed with the Greek adventure chronotope as we observed in Chief Mpona's vindication from witchcraft accusations, which is in the hands of fate and depends on the sudden return of Mwape the dumb boy whose journey to the city for treatment and delay of return is the reason for the accusations. This is further merged with the adventure everyday aspect of the teacher as a part of the action and at the same time an outsider who observes what is happening in the village. The combination of these different genres demonstrated how *Tongue of the Dumb* and its images are not simply a glorification of the past, but like the Belgian historical novel (Bemong, 2010), is a polysystem of different genres and relations of time and space. I also suggested that the chronotope born from the interaction is new and can no longer be defined by the individual comprising chronotopes. The image's new character exhibits changeability and variability related to synchronic and diachronic workings of chronotopes that prevent images from being static entities that can be transported from one stage to another.

Furthermore, I argued using the idea of Pure duration that the subjective perception of the world makes images in the novel, such as *Tongue of the Dumb*, always variable and not fixed images that can refer to static oral narrative images. This is based on the idea of pure duration, which suggests that as the world changes, peoples' perceptions change as well and this affects artistic creations (Eve-Zohar, 2005). The creation of artistic creations must not then be viewed as something static that is co-opted into the novel but as a combination of past experience or context and someone's perception of the present leading to an artistic creation. Past experiences often enter the novel as images of affection with their own space and time relations and they are the building blocks on which other images are formed. This is observed in how the chronotope of encounter at the point where the witchcraft trial in *The Tongue of the Dumb* brings together conservative beliefs on

witchcraft, on one hand, and father Oliver and the teacher that symbolise christianity, on the other hand. Both extreme cases are affected or influenced by Mwape's healing that created a new chronotope representing the epoch where conservative ideas and Christianity (and the new medicine) co-exist amicably. I established that the idea of pure duration is related to Ricoeur's (Ricoeur, 1984) threefold mimesis which represents a spiral movement in which images move and change flexibly from the society as mimesis[1] (past experience/ images of action) and interact with images of action in the novel as mimesis[2] and then the alteration or altered version of the chronotope is ploughed back into the society as mimesis[3]. Therefore, I pointed out that the changeability and alteration of images (chronotopes) that results from the creation of polysystems and the working of pure duration suggested that images in the novel cannot be equivalent to any fixed, frozen or static entity, such as oral narrative images.

In addition, I deconstructed the idea of linearity from oral narrative images to the novel with the idea that chronotopic constructions, such as images in both oral narratives and the novel, are made up of tripartite levels of artistic construction-plot-space, action-space and worldview space that interact in dynamic ways. This was for instance noted in *Quills of Desire*, which comprises the plot-space (events that form the overaching chronotope of the narrative) that involve a series of events leading to Wiza, the protagonist's expulsion, marriage and eventual suicide. This is combined with the action-space chronotopes (actions that support events, concretise the events through character actions and make visible plot-space events). Furthermore, this is merged with the worldview chronotopes (patterns of experience that charaterise), such as Wiza's school and village life where different actions take place and have specific characteristics or ontological features of expected behaviour. I argued that this means that there are various and unpredictable relations among the different levels of artistic construction because of the existence of many possible plot-spaces, action-spaces and worldviews. This is observed in the fact that the different worldviews dictate how Wiza behaves in different places such as at school where he is expected to be at the science fair and or in the Debate Club while in the village we see him drinking the local brew Katubi and going fishing (Sinyangwe, 2010). Therefore, the study showed that the many possible and unpredictable relations between different chronotopic levels challenge the idea of a static image in the novel, especially the transfer of a frozen image from oral narratives to the novel.

The analysis of chronotopic levels revealed variations of images or chronotopes because of dynamic interactions or internal chronotopic level variation and images in the novel. For instance, one observes that the frozen transfer of images from one stage or one genre to another is abolished by the fact that the action-space chronotope may either be an image of equillibrium or conflict. This is the case with the marriage chronotope in *Quills of Desire*, which can be viewed as a chronotope of equillibrium when viewed from the perspective of an image that will sustain the village and indigenous belief system in Wiza. In this case all events in the novel would be directed towards the marriage as the last rite of passage into the way of life of premodern indigenous village life. On the contrary, marriage can also be a conflict chronotope in another setting if it is viewed as the image that acts or is in conflict with the protagonists' actions if we consider it as an interruption to Wiza's desire for education. This is because getting married in the village curtails his chance to get educated. It also raises other issues, such as him commiting suicide when he realises that he can no longer persue his dream. Hence, one must note variability in the marriage chronotope's disposition brought about by the fact that, in one instance it facilitates the sustanance of a way of life, but inadvertently raises conflict by interrupting Wiza's education and life. This further demonstrated that the variability resulting from both inter and intra-chronotopic level interactions means that images in the novel cannot be fixated on any fixed signified such as oral narrative images.

The study further noted that images in the novel cannot be a linear continuation from oral narratives because they are articulated in an unstable space located in-between signifier and signified but outside (Barthes, 2001) the confines fixed of the signifier/signified relations. This means that signs and images in the novel are caught up in an eternal pursuit for the signified (and oral narrative image or centre of meaning) resulting in perpetual oscillation between desired signified and different signifiers. The result is an unstable borderline space between the two extremes where the sign fails to articulate as signified and as signifier –what I deemed an unstable in-between space that must be approached outside or beyond the confines of the normal dichotomy of signifier/signified signification. I anchored my argument on Bhabha's (2004) idea of a third space where culture is created as a space that allows other places to emerge and not as a combination of two pure hybrids or parent signs. This always results in a stituation where what is produced is never the intended but something else that disrupts articulation of a signified because this is not a

definite place but a space characterised by a process –hybridisation. Such a space cannot be tied to any signified, such as oral narratives, because articulation becomes an oscillation in the third space or in-between the something that resembles the signified (mimicry) at times and something that is almost different (menace) from the signified. This is because the sign is never a pure representation of the signified. In addition, the fact that other spaces are always being revealed and interrupting articulation of the signified means that the sign only exists at signifier level and is constantly being revised without closure. As a result, the sign is never absolute but is also always haunted by other places or signs at every moment, layers of signification and a subjective moving liminal borderline perpetually under revision. I therefore studied the image of marriage in *Echoes of betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) and established how the in-between space mentioned above reveals partial presence of images, ambivalence and unhomeliness without closure. I further explored the contradiction between theory and practice in the articulation of the ticklish sensation in *Ticklish Sensation* (Phiri, 1994) and observed that the in-between space is a space of subjectivity, simulation and located beyond the confines of normal signification.

I also argued that the unstable in-betweeness is anything that emerges out of oral narrative linearity's failure to map itself onto reality of the novel's signs. There is often a difference between theory (oral narrative discourse) and reality because there is a difference between the absolute abstract signified and what is produced in reality. The product is something that resembles the intended signified but is also different because some of what was not intended in the first place is produced (mimicry and menace at the same time) in the process. I illustrated the above idea with how the desire for a perfect marriage in *Echoes of Betrayal* (Namutowe, 2019) brings hope of the signified when marriage is working out in Melvin and Susan's case. Yet, the perfection is threatened when marriage is marred by Melvin's adultery. So whenever the sign of marriage moves in the direction of the signified perfect marriage it is pulled away by other signifiers such as adultery and extra-marital affairs that permeate the surface and make it difficult for absolute articulation of the perfect marriage. This is because the marriage, as in Isaac's case when he reconciles with Hilary, is constantly interrupted and haunted by other signs such as his affair with Susan. Isaac has moved on from the affair with Susan back to his marriage to Hilary but desires to locate himself in a borderline place between marriage and relationship. This is an unstable inbetweeness because he cannot be in two places at the same time. The double-borderline space

and unstable inbetweeness that Isaac desires here is pertinent to the ideas I raised about the eclectic analysis of images in the novel. This is because such an inbetweeness allows us to note spaces that would go unoticed if our eyes were fixed on absolute signification or oral narrative signified. As a result, I suggested that if one concentrated on one aspect of images in the novel, such as oral narrative influence, they would ignore the fact that the image is always haunted by otherness and the return of the uncanny or unwanted.

My observations on the marriages in *Echoes of Betrayal* were critical here. The marriages can only be a partial presence in the marriage while articulating an absent relationship or affair. The complete image of a perfect marriage can only exist as an anticipation, which is always a belated one. This is observed in Hilda's case where her final relationship with Derek does not offer the closure and happiness she expected. Instead, just as her marriage to Bernard that was marred by the uncanny presence of Nomsa, her new relationship is haunted by Bernard, her ex-husband. Hence, images in the novel, like the marriages in *Echoes of Betrayal*, must be viewed as characterised by an unstable or haunted inbetweeness due to hither and thither movement between marriage and affair. Such images, which are under perpetual modification but with no closure (because every new encounter introduces new aspects of the signifier of marriage), cannot signifiy anything absolute including oral narratives.

Furthermore, I explored the unstable in-between space that results from the contradiction between the theory of the ticklish sensation and Jojo's articulation of the boys' version of the ticklish sensation. The analysis revealed that reality always reveals something that is beyond the expected signified and this nullifies the claim of absolute signification. This disrupts the theoretical signification related to the dichotomy between images in the novel as signifier and oral narratives as theoretical signified. By extension, this means that signs in the novel characterised by such a contradiction cannot refer to any absolute dichotomy of signification in which they refer to any absolute signified including oral narratives. I noted that the difference between pedagogy and performance (Bhabha, 2004) in *Ticklish Sensation* reveals a third space that is neither pedagody or performance but beyond expected signification. Firstly, the study observed how Jojo's persuit for the ticklish sensation cancels and scatters the original boys' version of the ticklish sensation when his experiences with different girls prove different from what he expects. His grandmother curtails his persuit of Kinki whose breasts he wants to touch by offering her breasts (Phiri, 1994).

The reaction we get from Jojo when he touches his grandmother's breasts emerges in a third in-between space because this signifier (touching his grandmother's breasts) is different from the expected signified (the boys' version of the ticklish sensation). This makes it difficult for the boys' version to be articulated because Jojo's experiences with the various girls are different from the authorised ticklish sensation. Jojo's experiences demonstrate the complications that official theoretical intrepretive mythicised archetypes, such as oral narrative ancestry, face in reality of the novel. The more the signified ticklish sensation is tested on different girls, the more the signified is dismissed and lost forever in the maze and layers of other signifiers that emerge. This is observed in the reactions by the villagers to Jojo when he chases Kinki around the village in order to touch her breasts. The comments or signifiers that arise, such as traditional abomination, or satan's saliva or Jojo's father's response to his behaviour, divert from the boys' version of the ticklish sensation because these responses have nothing to do with Jojo's original motivation. The fact that the ticklish sensation is related to the past and subjective to Jojo's authorisation of one boy's experience with a girl raises pertinent questions on the reliability of the signified ticklish sensation. This can be extended to the assumption that oral narrative images or any image is a reliable signified for a signifier that is multiplied and scattered in all directions in the novel. I suggested that the ticklish sensation, and by extenstion signs in the novel, must be viewed as subjective fleeting images oscillating between signifier and signified affecting and have been affected by signs along the way. Hence, signs must be viewed beyond absolute signification as we observe when Jojo is freed from the confines of absolute signification of the ticklish sensation when he kisses a girl called Lise and says he enjoyed it despite it not being equivalent to the expected ticklish sensation.

Lastly, I argued that image in the novel cannot be absolutely identified with oral narrative mnemonic devices because the idea of 'identity' presupposes a pre-inscribed tangible entity to which objects subscribe. I relate this to the claim that images in the novel depend on oral narratives for their identity because this falsefully suggests a pre-inscribed oral narrative logocentre on which identity of images in the novel is inscribed. Pre-inscription of oral narrative 'identity' on images in the novel is based on a culturally naturalised entity that may not reflect the images in the novel or may not be able to account for the other places that are articulated in the novel. In Chapter Six I challenged this view based on the Derridan (1974) view that such an idea creates binaries

between oral narratives and the novel where one pair, in this case oral narratives, are considered the custodian of identity. I further argued that the nature by which pre-inscription of 'identity' is done is similar to the Lacanian (Lacan, 1992) creation of self-identity, which states that the search for identity and the creation of identity itself is based on an inherent helplessness related to identity that drives human beings to search for identity in what they are not/ other. The symbolic law curtails the search in one preferred Other (Phallic), in order to curb the projection onto so many others. Unfortunately, the process by which the preferred Other is instituted at the expense of others creates margins when those images that do not fit into the desired category are othered and excluded. I likened oral narratives to such a preferred Other and argue that the reversal of orientalist colonial views by African literary scholars (Chinweizu, et al., 1985; Onwumere & Egbulonu, 2014) ends up duplicating or creating margins within margins when images that do not fit into the space of the desired Other (oral narratives and indigenous African culture) are excluded or othered and thus, creating centre and preriphery relations. So while the aim may be to subvert colonial orientalist views, the institution of an Other (orality discourse) at the centre that cannot encompass every image in the novel, fails. According to Brubaker and Cooper (2000), it fails because such a move attempts to place everything under an unbrella of the pre-inscribed term 'identity', which cannot account for every aspect it purports to identify. To this end, I use Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) alternative idioms for pre-inscribed terms such as identity in relation to oral narratives in order to explore other 'others' that emerge when a pre-inscribed signified, such as oral narratives, cannot account for other aspects in the novel.

The study noted that oral narrative images cannot be absolutely identified with images in the novel because of the inadvertent creation of margins within margins. That is when those images that do not fit into the voice or category of the margin are marginalised within the margin. This is observed with the street kids in the *Mourning Bird* that the NGOs claim to speak for and yet silence them in the process. The voice of the street kids is not heard except through the NGO's version formed when the organisations visit the streek kids from a distance and give them food and false hope but does not include the street kids' perspective (Kalimamukwento, 2019). This means that the street kids are pushed into the margins within an already marginalised society. Furthermore, fixation on oral narrative identity or any pre-inscribed signified creates centre/periphery relations whereby the comprador intelligenstia designate themselves at the centre with their own idea of what identity

should be. I argued that this description of the relationship between NGOs and street kids, where street kids are marginalised and silenced, cannot refer to any absolute term such as identity. It is the failure to encompass every aspect of the image of society in *The Mourning Bird* that leads to Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) conclusion that identity is a problematic analytical tool. I suggested that the centre (that controls discourse) or the top-down all seeing eye is selectively myopic and blind because it only sees what it wants to see as observed in Chimuka who is objectified and seen only as a sexual object by her customers. This applies to any discourse, such as the discourse on orality and how it relates with the novel's images, which privileges a particular signified over others. Thus, the study established that there is need to engage the other discourses present in the novel or the present silences as we observe in *The Mourning Bird* because the margin is not as silent and passive as it seems. This is evidenced by Chimuka's wilful resistance of her father's death and the rape by her resolution that if the incidences were not talked about they would not be true. This is further noted in Chimuka's internalised speech that she uses upon realisation that Bo Nyambe will not listen to her grievances. My observations concerning images in *The Mourning Bird* led to the suggestion that images in the novel must be viewed as different fragments whereby one can take up a position of analysis in full cognisance of the other aspects present in the novel. I, therefore, conclude that, only by doing so will the analysis of the Zambian novel be eclectic and free from pre-inscibed ananlysis under the umbrella term 'identity' or oral narrative fixity.

I utilised Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) idea to substitute 'identity' as a category of analysis with infinite other idioms because substituting it with any fixed term, such as oral narrative ascendency, would just be as over burdened as the term identity. I used Brubaker and Cooper's (2000, pp. 14-25) idioms – identitfication and categorisation; self-understanding and social position; commonality, connectedness and groupness – as overarching guides for my suggestion that other 'others' are always emeging in the novel making it impossible for images to refer to a single entity such as fixed identity and oral narratives. I firstly suggested that articulation of images in the novel, in an active process of identification, which continually calls upon images to keep identifying themselves through the simulteneous articulation of other 'others' (other than the oral narrative) as preferred other. The conclusion is that identity in this way fails when it does not account for everything it is purported to represent. For instance, the mixture of genres in *The Old Drift* reflects many others besides one and if we concentrated on one we would miss the other 'others' that do

not remain the same over time. We observe this changeability of images or genres in the Rapunzel fairytale and Sibillas's story, which though similar to the fairy tale, changes over time. Secondly, I suggested that when other 'others', emerge in the novel, they must be viewed as independent subjects from the preferred other with their own relations with new others. For instance, on the one hand, the dam built on the Zambezi river in *The Old Drift* (Serpel, 2019) may be seen as a preferred Other for a goal set on the 'writing back' agenda in the novel. On the other hand, the dam is also exposed to new others because of its intrepretation as a symbol of different things and this further complicates the authority and homogeniety of the primary or preferred Other. For instance, the ecocritical perspective for the dam and further the danger of unharnessed technology are perspectives that one would consider if they focused on the effect of the dam on nature and ecology. This means, as Brubaker and Cooper (2000) observes, images are subjective and not obliged to pay alligence to any absolute form such as 'identity' or oral narratives. I, therefore, argued that images should be viewed as having divided essence because it is not possible to say everything there is to say about images such as Naila's discoveries about her grandfather, based on this subjectivity.

The study further established that images in the novel should be considered as beginning without origins such as the choir that appears from nowhere in *The Old Drift*. This is because origins are always infiltrated as we observe in the two contesting myths related to the origin of The Old Drift that challenges the general authenticity often associated with myths. Hence, the study established, from the role of women in *The Old Drift* that, images in the novel must be viewed from the perspective of role-playing dependent on perspective and position. For instance, the role of women as subservient and a bride prize for millitary prowess would be expected if we took the indigenous oral narrative portrayal of a woman. Yet, I observed that one needs to consider the image of women from a different perspective for novels such as *The Old Drift* whose treatment of women does not reflect a desire for the restoration of the indigenous woman. This is because some contemporary authors have moved to writing back to their own societies and the indigenous portrayal of women in oral narratives in a self reflexive manner (Mwangi, 2009). I suggest this as one possible reason for the shift in Serpel's portrayal of Matha and Bernadetta in *The Old Drift* as assertive and independent. Hence, I suggested that the impossibility of fitting images into fixed categories such as connectedness, groupness and commoness (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) must be viewed in the

light of the impossible 'I' because of the failure of the subject 'I' to enunciate itself definitely in the novel. This was observed in the failure of the chorus in *The Old Drift* to identify themselves accurately as sigular or plural subject, 'I' or 'us'. The 'I' should then be considered as impossible because the search for an absolute 'I' is a search for 'identity'. Yet, the search for absolute signified can never be successful. This is because the search for 'identity' is inherently characterised by helplessnes and a desire for an Other (Chiesa, 2007) outside itself and equals an empty set.

Overall, what emerged in the study is that images in some novels are more complicated than blind imitations of oral narrative images. I acknowledged the interaction and influence of other aspects and cultures on images in the novel over time while recognising that oral narrative menmonic methods and devices play a role in framing the Zambian Novel in English. This results in more complex images that cannot claim sole ascendency from oral narrative mnemonics despite claims by the discourse on linearity (Onwumere & Egbulonu, 2014). The assumption is that the presence of oral narrative mnemonic devices in the Zambian novel is for collective memory and cultural autonomy through a recapturing of pre-colonial indigenous oral aspects and tradition espoused in oral art. I argued that such fixation on oral narrative mnemonic images in both literary practice and analysis prevents an eclectic analysis of images in the novel because it forces one to view images in a particular way at the expense of other aspects reflected in the art. This is evidenced in many studies such as the Negritude (Onwumere & Egbulonu, 2014) and decolonialist proponents (Ashcroft, 2004) and some Zambian scholars (Chilala, 2016) reviewed in Chapter One that present a one sided analysis of novels that prioritises oral narrative images and methods. Such an approach has created gaps in the analysis of African and specifically the Zambian novel in English because it does not account for the variability, changeability and dynamic interactions taking place in the novel. It is for this reason that I suggested an approach that considers that oral narrative influence can be one but not the only influence in the novel. That is why I deconstructed the logocentricity of oral narratives to the novel and the fixed signifier/signified dichotomy relationship often assumed by the discourse on linearity by the observations I raise from the novels that I analysed in this thesis. Images in the novel cannot be pure descendents of oral narratives or signifiers of oral narrative signified because novels are characterised by heteroglossia and the carnivalesque. In addition, images in some novels are characterised by differance, varying time and space (chronotopes) relations, and an unstable in-betweeness. Hence, the images cannot be

fixated to a pre-inscribed 'identity' such as oral narratives which perpetuates othering and marginalisation. Instead, the novels images must be opened up to infinite play of signification in which other 'others' are acknowledged and allowed to emerge at signifier level without being tied down by any fixed term such as 'identity' or oral narrative linearity.

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